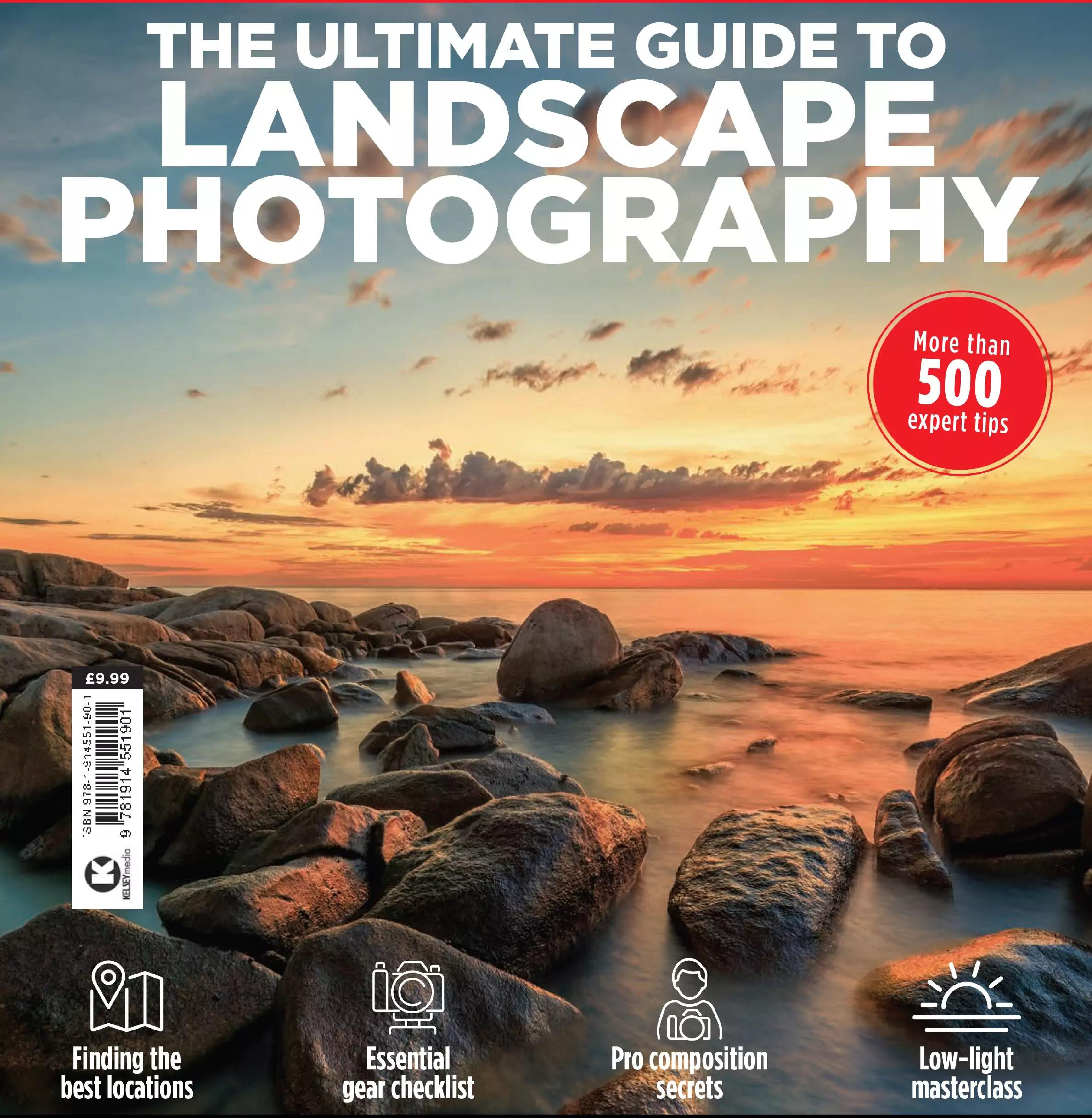
Make the jump from 'good' landscape photos to truly great ones

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHY



More than 500 expert tips

£9.99

ISBN 978-1-914551-90-1

9 781914 551901

KELSEY media

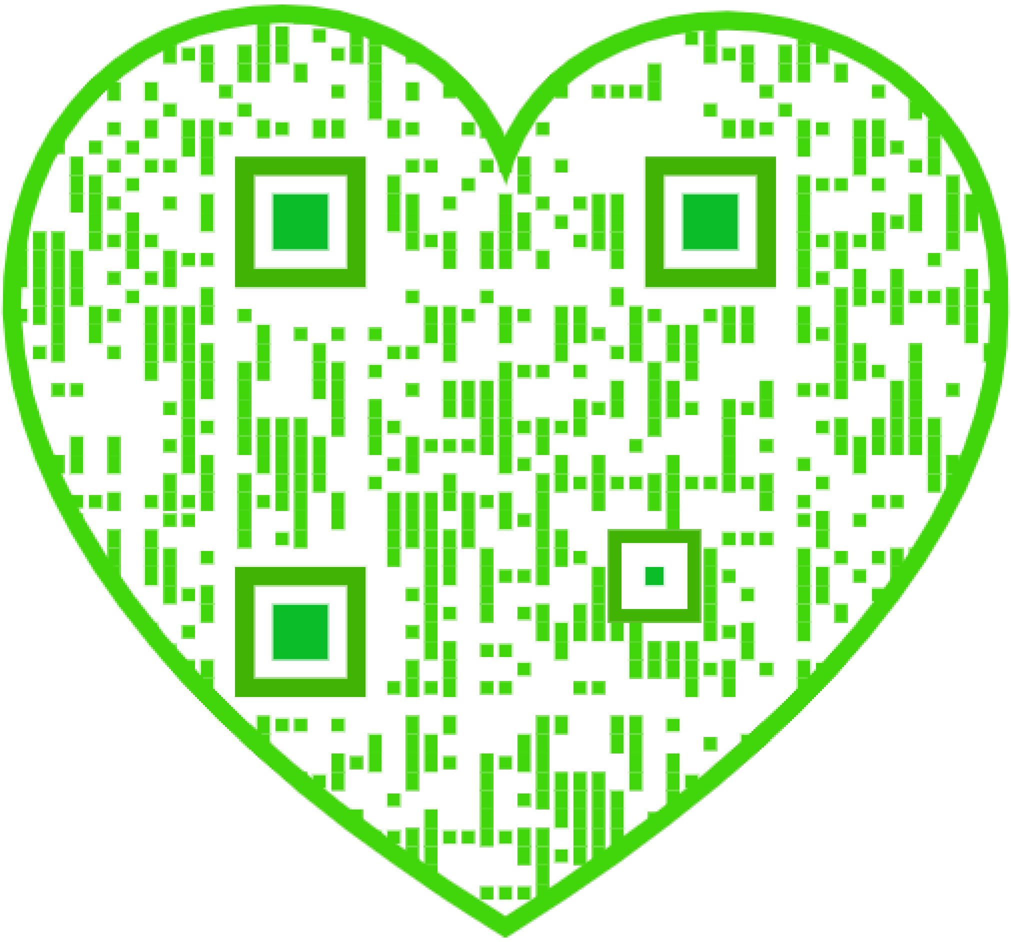
Finding the best locations

Essential gear checklist

Pro composition secrets

Low-light masterclass

Mastering filters • The B&W advantage • Shooting starscapes and more



Welcome

Landscapes remain a perennially popular subject for photography, with good reason. The landscape changes every day, with an endless variety of light and weather conditions, so even a well-known beauty spot can always yield fresh images. There are also a lot of different ideas to try these days, from the conventional to the experimental and abstract. Indeed, many photographers want to move away from very predictable approaches.

Whatever your preferred approach, in this packed, 132-page guide we cover all the essentials of great landscape photography, such as finding locations, mastering exposure, composition challenges, and trying new creative ideas (such as shooting vertically). You'll also discover how to make the most of strong sunlight, and master night and 'starscape' photography. Shooting the night sky and incorporating it into your landscapes has become a lot easier in recent years, thanks to the availability of affordable wide-aperture lenses, improvements in the low-light performance of cameras, and breakthroughs in photo editing.

On that subject, editing your landscapes is covered in-depth too, including black & white conversion and adding mood and drama to your shots.

We also focus on some of the best equipment to use for landscape photography and how to get the most from it. Gone are the days when you'd have to carry around a big heavy camera and a bag of clanking lenses, which is good news for both your back and your bank balance.

There's everything you need here to take your landscape photography to the next level, wherever you are in the world and whatever diverse landscapes you want to shoot. **Nigel Atherton, Editor**

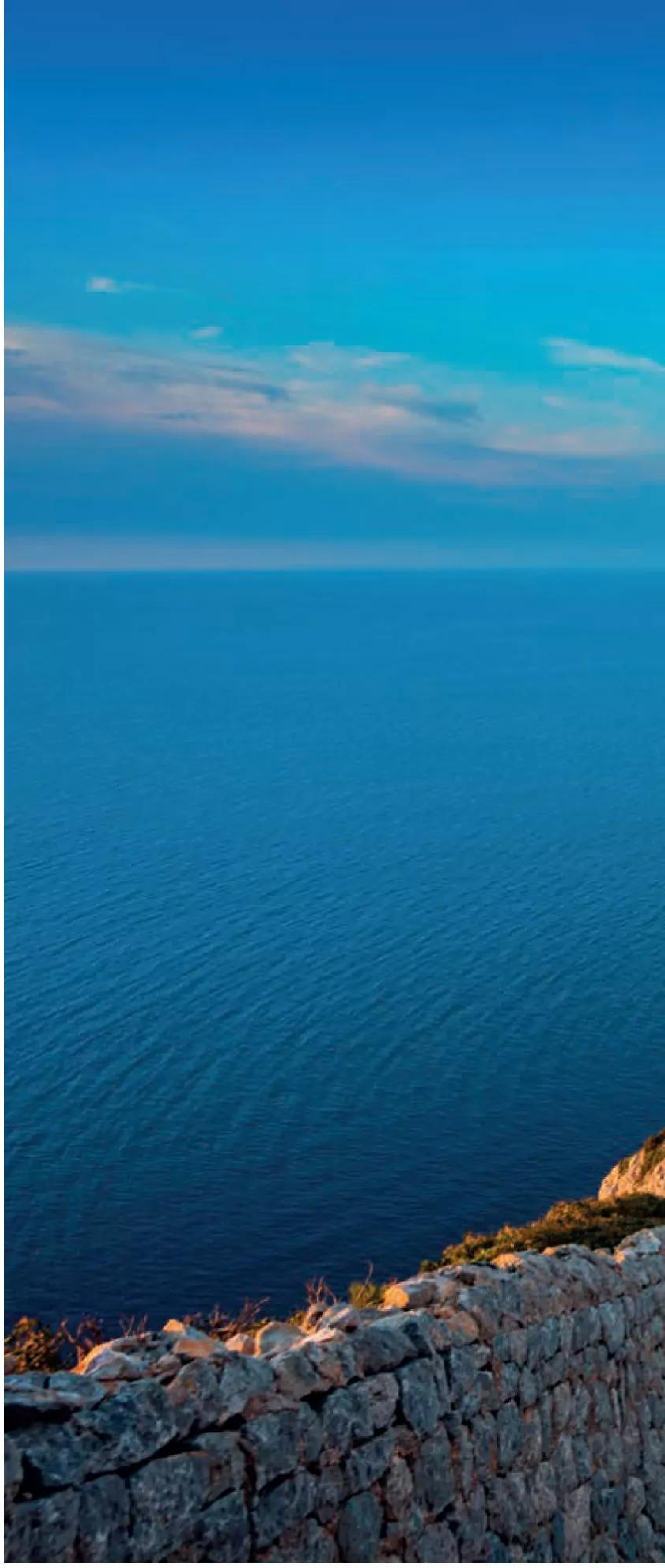
www.kelsey.co.uk
Kelsey Media, The Granary, Downs Court, Yalding Hill, Yalding, Maidstone, Kent ME18 6AL. Email ap.ed@kelsey.co.uk
Group Editor Nigel Atherton ● **Head of Investment: Photography** Mike Pyatt
Retail Director Steve Brown ● **Publishing Director** Mark Winterton ● **Print Production Controller** Hayley Brown
Distribution in Great Britain Seymour Distribution Limited, 2 East Poultry Avenue, London, EC1A 9PT. Telephone 020 7429 4000 www.seymour.co.uk
Distribution in Northern Ireland and the Republic Of Ireland Newspread. Telephone +353 23 886 3850
Printed by ACORN

Kelsey Media 2025 © All rights reserved. Kelsey Media is a trading name of Kelsey Publishing Ltd. Reproduction in whole or in part is forbidden except with permission in writing from the publishers.

MAIN COVER IMAGE © GETTY IMAGES. FILM STRIP, LEFT TO RIGHT: © JAMES ABBOTT / © VERITY MILLIGAN / © KIM GRANT (KIMGRANTPHOTOGRAPHY.CO.UK) / © VERITY MILLIGAN. BACK COVER: © PAULINA STOPKA

© GETTY IMAGES

© GETTY IMAGES/MIKE WILSON


© GETTY IMAGES/ALLARD SCHAGER

Contents

6 Tips for success
Four landscape lovers share tips for showstopping scenics

14 Location, location, location
Struggling to find the best landscape locations? We reveal how to make sure you're in the right place at the right time

20 The three magic filters
Why you only need three filters in your kit bag

26 Using wideangles
Why wideangle lenses are so useful, what you can do to get the most out of them, and when to go wide

32 Minimalist landscapes
Award-winning pro Anthony Lamb's minimalist approach

38 A higher love
Kacper Kowalski tells Amy Davies about his passion for physically flying into the air to achieve his stunning images

44 Insight: Towards the Rock of Gibraltar
Charlie Waite does battle with the iconic limestone monolith

46 Spring into action
We speak to three pros for their tips on shooting in spring

52 Winter in black & white
Three of the UK's top landscape photographers reveal how to shoot stunning black & white winter landscapes

58 Long-exposure problems fixed
Achieve stunning results with this popular technique

64 Urban beauty
Our experts share their vision and top tips for capturing the charm in apparently mundane spaces

70 Shooting in low light
Don't pack your camera away when the light is low. Our advice and techniques will ensure great results

76 Intimate spring landscapes
Three photographers discuss the art of intimate spring photography, and how to make your images stand out

82 Insight: Wave
Warren Keelan discusses his emotional images of the ocean

84 Change perspective
Paulina Stopka shares why she loves shooting vertically and discusses the challenges

90 Moody winter woodlands
Why creating images full of mood and atmosphere takes a keen eye and an ability to see order in chaos

96 A changing landscape
Four photographers who take a more experimental approach

100 Strong sun
How to control and maximise the sun's potential, even at the 'worst' time of day, when it's high in the sky

106 Absolute sharpness
Focus stacking is a great technique for getting front-to-back sharpness in landscapes. And it's not that hard

112 Insight: Lensless landscapes
Pinhole photography is one of the most basic forms of picture-making. Steve Gosling is your guide

114 Heavenly bodies
Auroras, star trails and the moon – expert tips

120 Boost your landcapes
From Lightroom to Luminar, we explore some of the finest options for processing and enhancing your raw photos

124 Work out like a pro
Landscape pro Justin Minns's Lightroom workflow

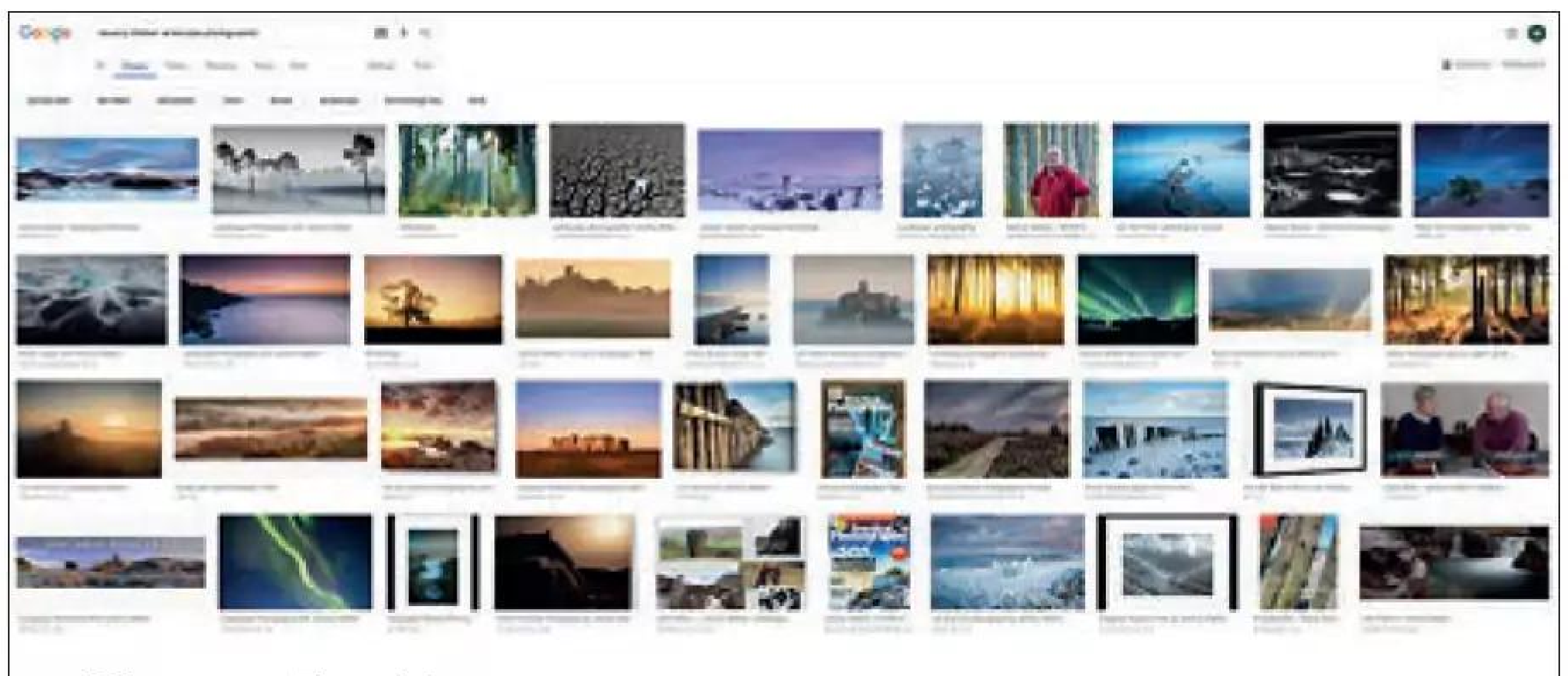
Tips for success

From finding the perfect location to composing pictures with maximum impact, four landscape lovers offer their top tips for showstopping scenics

Jeremy Walker
For more than 25 years, Jeremy Walker has been producing landscape, architectural and urban images for use by advertising agencies, design clients and publishers. Not only does he lead LEE Filters workshops, but he also runs his own workshops in the UK and overseas. See **www.jeremywalker.co.uk**

Location hunting

Finding locations is easy if you devise a plan of action and put in some legwork



Google it

(Other search engines are available, don't forget.) Search engines are a powerful tool for research and perhaps *the* best tool for location hunting. Cross-check your facts, though, because not all of the information on the internet is accurate and up to date – that ruined castle you have seen images of may now be a luxury five-star hotel, so double-check before you go.

Check magazines and books

Many publishers now produce books for location finding (no doubt there is also an app and tablet version). Split into regions or counties, these books will show an image of the location, but go on to give exact coordinates, parking spots, what time of day or year to shoot, and pretty much where you should put your tripod.

Do it yourself

Check out Ordnance Survey maps (the proper paper ones, not the ones on your phone). Study a map and ask yourself questions about the terrain; look at footpaths and bridleways to see where they lead and what opportunities they may afford. Just because a particular area does not have any images on the web does not mean that it's a poor area for photography. Don't be a sheep, be a leader.

Take advantage of local knowledge

Speak to the locals and tell them what you are doing or looking for. Local farmers are a great source of information – after all, they are the ones who are out in all weathers, at all times of the day, so they will know their patch intimately.

Search through websites

Look at the websites of landscape photographers and workshop companies. Many photographers will put the location information alongside their images. Check out their social media feeds and see if they mention the nearest town or landmark. Workshop companies have to advertise where they're going, so they post images of their tours. Many will mention where they're staying, too, which provides a clue.

ALL PICTURES ON THESE PAGES © JEREMY WALKER

Jeremy Walker
6 September 2017 ·

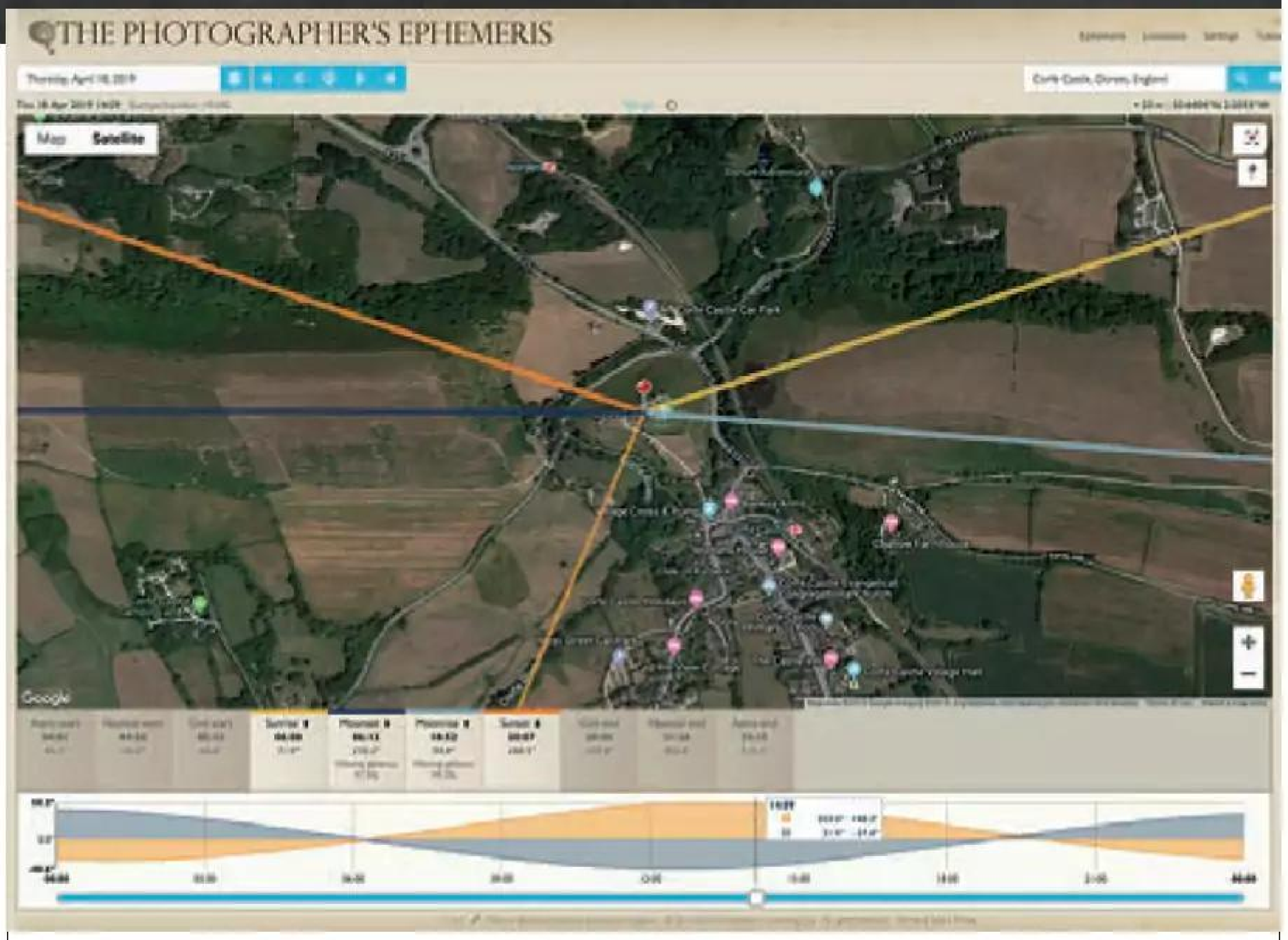
Glastonbury Tor, autumn mist and the sunrise is getting a little later.....yeah.

Use social media

Follow the photographers and image makers that you admire. Follow their Facebook posts or their Instagram accounts. All photographers want you to 'Like' their images and most seem quite happy to tell you where they are shooting, what they are shooting and where they are heading to next. Be warned, though, some photographers will deliberately mislead and not reveal the exact location of their image. It's important to do your own research.

Be prepared

Recce your location. Check out weather forecasts, sunrise and sunset times and, if appropriate, tide times. Know how to get back to your car, as paths will look very different in the dark when lit with a head torch. If you have the time, explore your location in advance, even on a grey day when shooting opportunities may be limited. The more you know about your location, the better the chances of securing a great image.



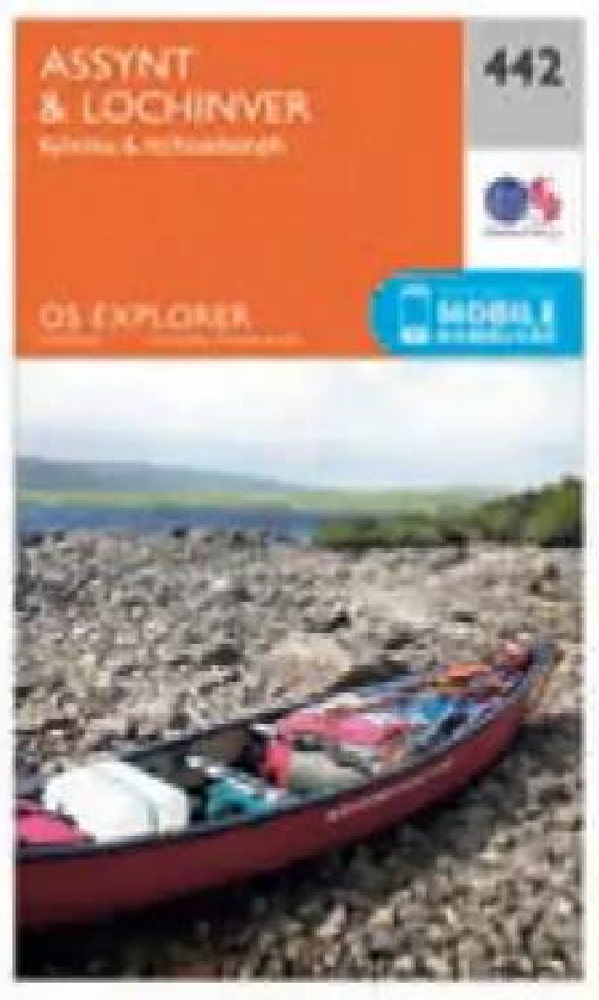
Download an app

There are hundreds of apps for finding locations, and once you have found one there are hundreds more telling you if it will rain, what time the sun will set and in which direction the moon will rise. There really is an app for everything. Probably the most useful is The Photographer's Ephemeris. Strictly speaking, this is not a location-finding app, but it's one of the most useful for location photographers.

KIT LIST

◀ Mobile phone

Make sure your phone is fully charged, and conserve power. If you're heading to a location with poor reception, check the last place where you had a strong signal just in case you have to make an emergency call.



◀ Ordnance Survey map

Carry an OS map of your location and know how to read it. If you don't want to carry a bulky map, then before you head out, download the section you need from the internet (try Bing Maps), do an A4 printout, and put it in a waterproof sleeve.

Head torch and whistle ▼

If your phone fails, you can still attract attention in an emergency. Learn the correct sequence of blasts or flashes to aid rescuers. A torch, preferably a head torch, should be carried at all times – you may linger longer than expected and light levels will start to fall.

PETZL
TIKKINA
Access the inaccessible

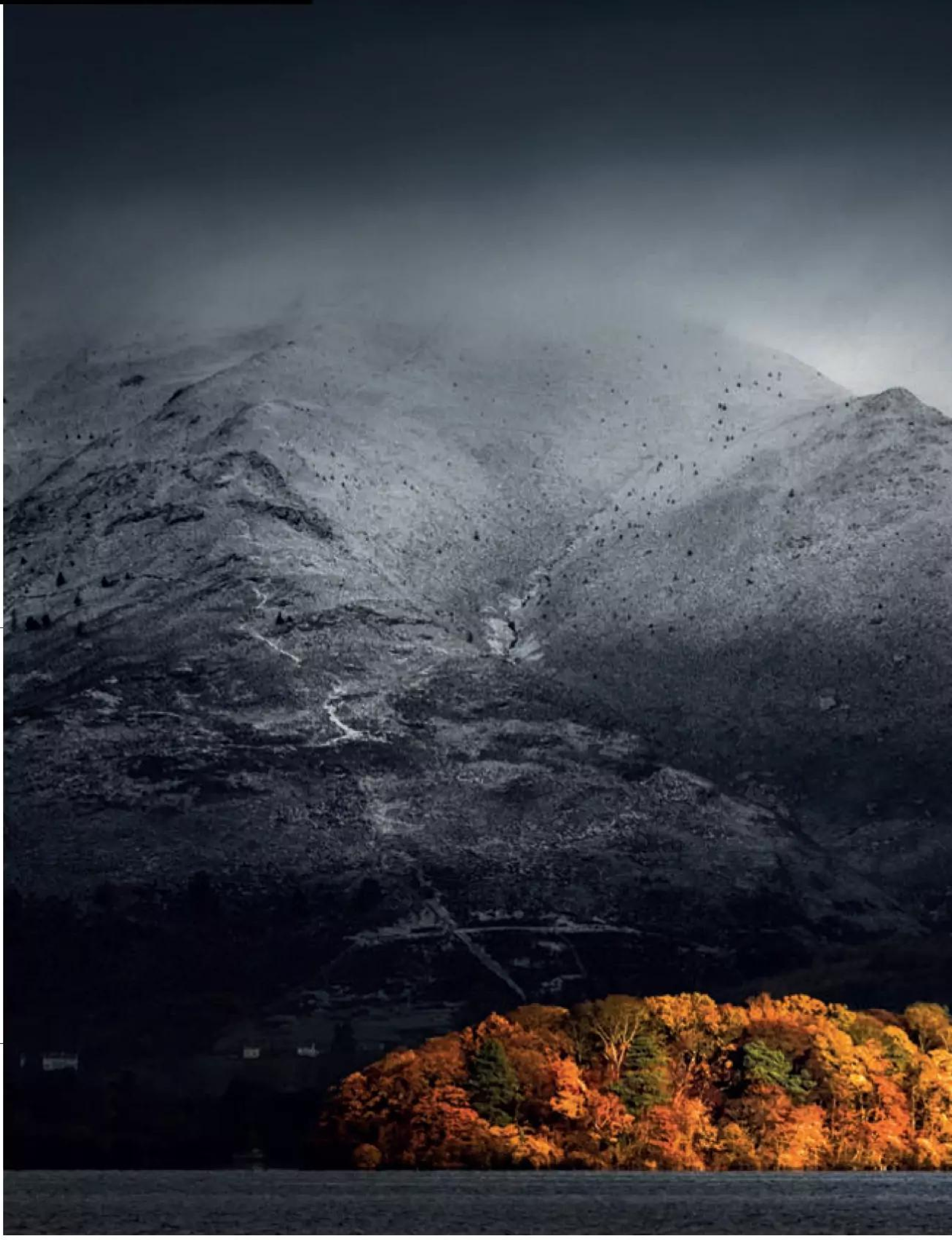
Verity Milligan
Verity is a professional landscape photographer based in Birmingham. She has worked on campaigns for organisations such as Yorkshire Tea and Visit Britain. She's happiest when outdoors, and relishes the opportunity to connect with people, environments and cities. Visit **www.veritymilliganphotography.com.**

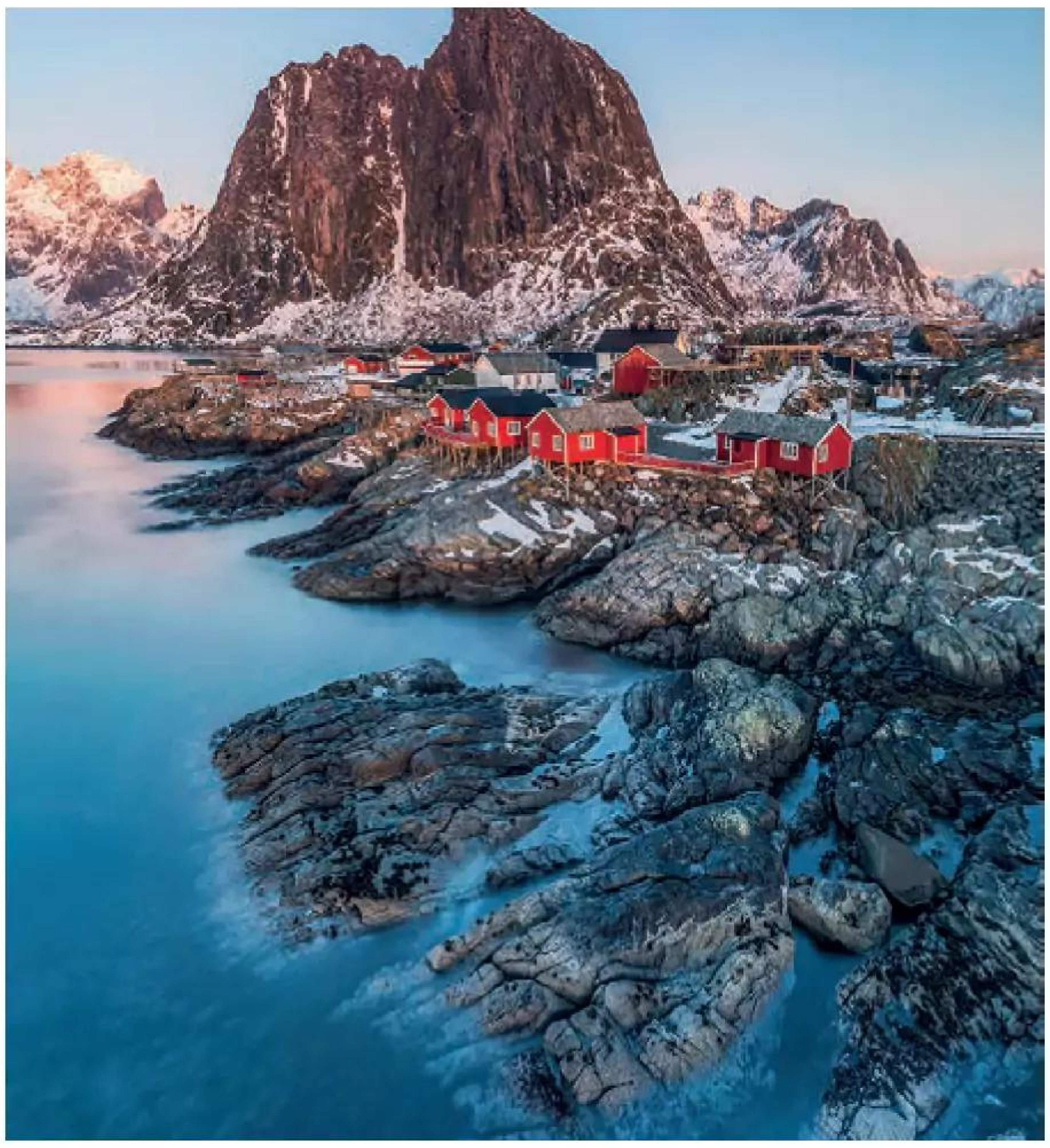
Crucial composition

Composing eye-catching pictures can sometimes mean breaking the rules

It's not all about the wide angle

Traditionally, when we consider landscape photography, we automatically think of wideangle lenses. However, one of my favourite things to do is shoot landscapes with a telephoto lens. Having the reach of a longer lens enables me to go deeper into a scene and explore the smaller details that could otherwise have been missed in a photograph shot with a wider lens. This kind of landscape photography can be difficult to master, but it offers the opportunity to capture a scene from unexplored angles.





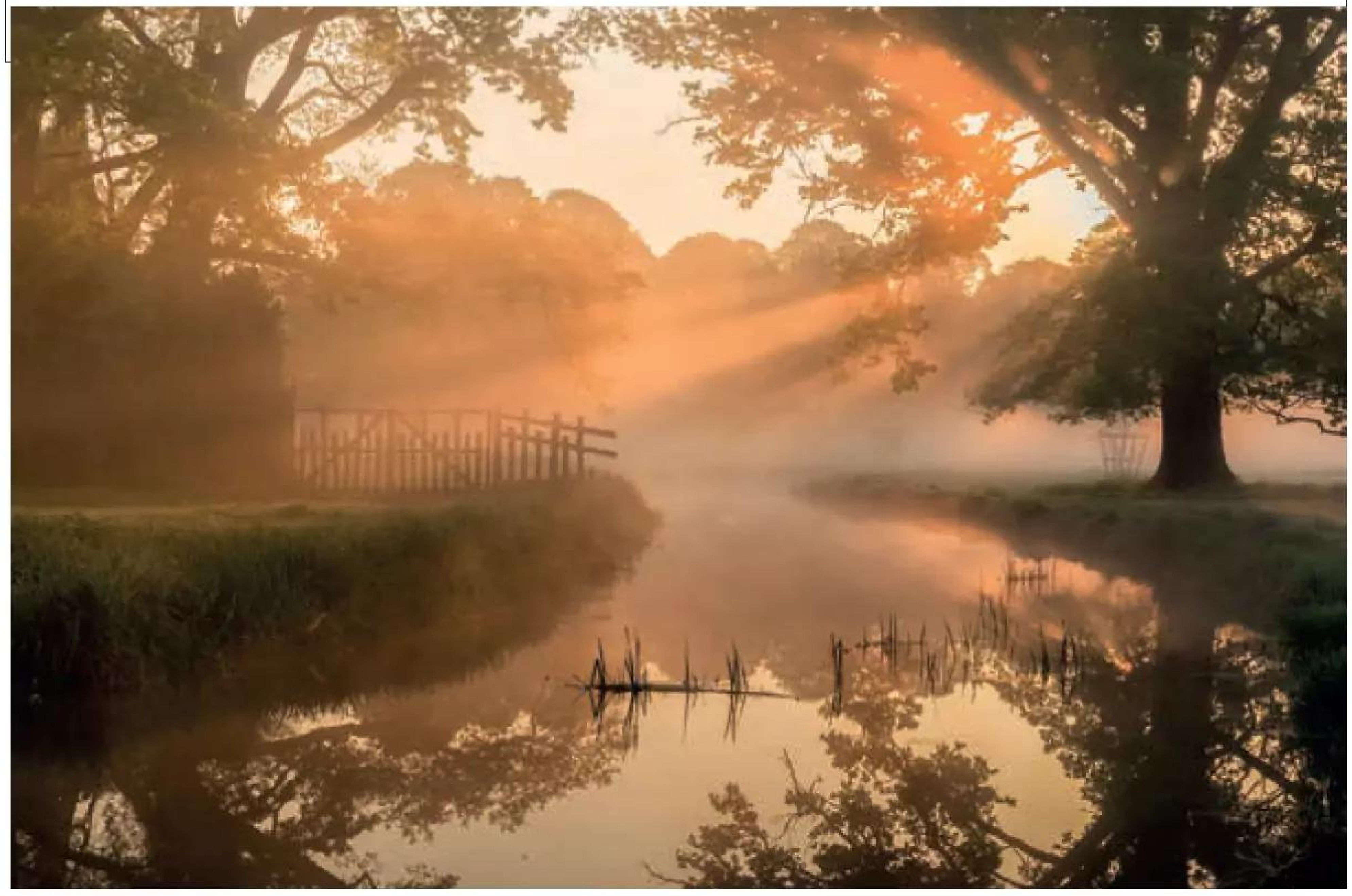
Shoot landscapes in portrait

Landscape photographers will often have a wideangle lens in their kit bag. This can encourage the photographer to include as much as possible in the photograph. Shooting landscapes in the portrait format is a great way to focus the mind on a particular composition and provides an opportunity to really consider what should be in the frame. Shooting landscapes in portrait orientation can be particularly effective if you've got a strong foreground and wish to lead the viewer through the scene to the background.

ALL PICTURES ON THESE PAGES © VERITY MILLIGAN

Play with the light

When the sun is low in the sky, it casts a wonderful golden hue across the landscape. Where you position your camera will change how you perceive that light. I don't often shoot directly into the sun because of the implications of lens flare, and if the sun is behind you it can make the scene quite garish. Ideally, depending on the circumstances, using side light in your composition can be particularly pleasing, especially during dawn and dusk.



Change your perspective

Photography is a participation activity – you're not meant to stay in one spot. Changing the perspective by moving the camera up and down can completely transform a composition. Placing the camera close to the ground can provide a completely new perspective on a scene and you might end up seeing a composition that would not be possible if you were shooting from your usual camera position. The same applies to a higher perspective, especially if you're using a wideangle lens and you've got a strong foreground.

The rule of thirds

One of the most basic rules in all of photography, not just landscape, is the rule of thirds. Instinctively, the human eye knows when something looks correct in an image and more so when it doesn't. The rule of thirds encourages positioning of important elements one third of the way in from the edge of the frame. The more you practise composing this way, the more it becomes second nature and you begin to understand how all the elements should work together in the image.

Break the rules

However, there are certain circumstances when it's okay to 'break' the rule of thirds, particularly if you're photographing reflections. In this case, it makes more sense (and it's more pleasing to the eye) to position the horizon in the middle of the image so you can maximise the impact of the reflection. This can be especially effective if you're capturing a body of water like a lake, canal, or even a puddle!

Use your mobile to 'sketch' a composition

When I'm out in the landscape I'm encumbered with a lot of kit, which can make it difficult to continuously change position. If you're like me in this way, one trick is to use your smartphone to visualise a composition. Most phone lenses are 21-24mm, so are comparable to a wideangle. The phone gives me freedom to move around in the scene and pinpoint the best composition without struggling with my kit. And while I'm there, I capture the scene on my phone for good measure.

Leave out the sky

When I first started capturing landscape photographs, I would make sure I had everything in the frame: the foreground, background and the sky. This not only made it a struggle to expose correctly, but it also made my images quite 'messy'. On workshops, I often give the advice to avoid including the sky in your compositions. This allows you to concentrate on the scene in front of you without the distraction of dealing with the bright highlights that are so often part of the sky.

KIT LIST

Tripod ▶

My carbon-fibre Gitzo Mountaineer Series 2 is essential. I can trust it to keep my camera steady even if the conditions are less than ideal.

Filters ▶

I currently shoot with the LEE Filters 100 kit. The circular polariser and 0.9 soft ND grad are permanently on the front of my camera.

Lens cleaner ▼

Small, but infinitely useful, especially if I'm shooting in changeable weather or near the coast. Ultimately, clean lenses ensure my images stay sharp.

CAMERA LENS CLEANER
VSGO
CAMERA LENS CLEANER

David Clapp

David Clapp is a landscape, architectural and travel photographer. A jack of all trades, he works for Canon UK, is a stock photographer for Getty Images and leads popular photographic tours across the world. David recently received a direct fellowship from the RPS.
Visit **www.davidclapp.co.uk**

Camera settings

Successful landscape photography starts with the right camera settings

Manual mode

Gain maximum control of your exposures by using manual mode. Although this seems somewhat confusing at first, take time to learn how the change in aperture, shutter speed and ISO affects the exposure. The camera's in-built metering system can only do so much, so use manual to gain complete control.

Step 1 Choose the aperture to control depth of field.

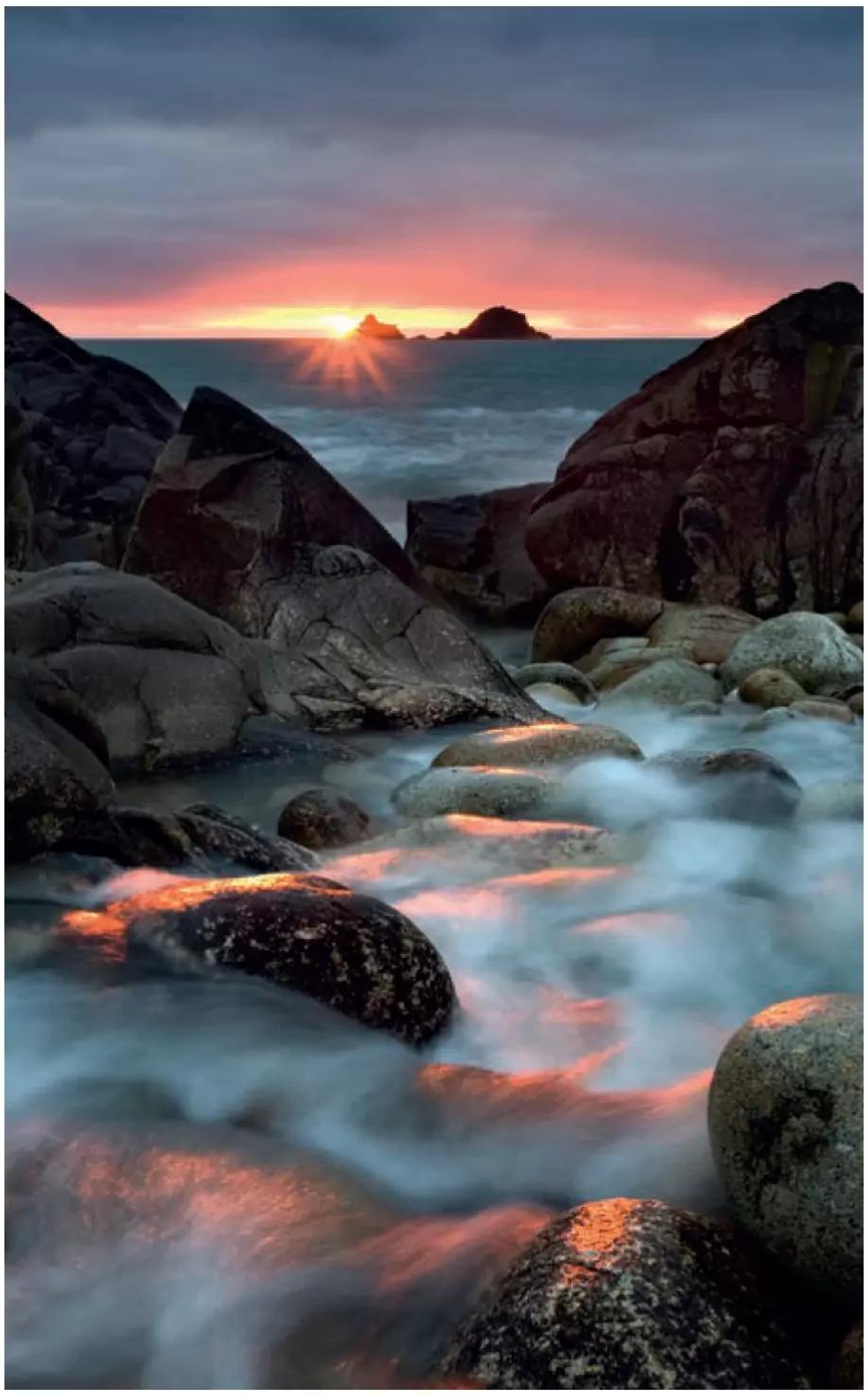
Step 2 Dial in shutter speed to alter image brightness.

Step 3 Adjust your ISO, if you feel your shutter speed is too slow.

ALL PICTURES ON THESE PAGES © DAVID CLAPP

Don't fear high ISO

Many landscape photographers fear using high ISOs, but – with the quality of modern cameras – there has never been a better time to use it. A higher ISO such as 1600 is virtually noise free, even on most consumer cameras, and should be embraced. Shooting landscapes with a long lens can benefit greatly from high ISO, lifting the shutter speed to reduce camera shake. Higher ISO can also be perfect for controlling motion, like water movement in rivers or coastal landscapes.



Mirror lock-up

The one way of ensuring your imagery is as sharp as possible is to use mirror lock-up (with a DSLR). With your camera mounted on a tripod, vibration can be caused not only by wind but also by the mirror movement as it lifts up and down, especially with longer focal lengths. Using this feature alongside a cable release or a two-second timer will ensure the sharpest possible image, as the mirror lifts up, before a delayed shutter fires.

Customise 'My Menu'

Most cameras have a My Menu feature that allows you to collate all your essential menu items into a list, so you can avoid endless menu searching. Some important ones to include are white balance (if it's only located in the menu), mirror lock-up for DSLRs, and picture styles (for switching to B&W, for example). I am surprised to see 'Format Card' in the My Menu list on many client cameras!

Custom controls

Custom controls are a great way of storing a snapshot of the entire camera's settings and retrieving them via a quick turn of a dial for handheld landscapes. Many cameras contain as many as three custom settings or more (C1, C2, C3), so store your presets to save you from menu digging. Set C1 to aperture priority, single shot, f/5.6, ISO 200, and daytime white balance. Set C2 to the same, but with ISO 1600 (for darker environments). Then set C3 to the same again, but with low-speed continuous shot and servo focusing, in case something unexpected happens (like a wildlife opportunity).

Image stabilisation

Sometimes you need to use all the tools you can get to achieve that sharp shot, so image stabilisation saves you from reaching for the tripod. My record for a pin-sharp handheld shot at 400mm is 1/3sec! Image stabilisation (IS or VR) works by using gyroscopic elements to correct any physical movements, operating a lens element to move in the opposite way to that direction. When on the move, or in failing light, let IS help you get that successful shot. Leave it switched on all the time, but not when on a tripod, although some professional lenses recommend leaving it switched on.

Change the aspect ratio

Learn to see differently by using the camera in different aspect ratios. The beauty of these modes is that they teach you to spot compositions and encourage a more interesting approach to an image – a bit like choosing different time signatures in music. Most cameras have additional aspect ratios, such as 4:3, 16:9 and my favourite, 1:1. Learning to see square is one of the most powerful lessons and creates a wonderful alternative portfolio. Remember to shoot in raw, as this will ensure you can revert to 3:2 when processing.

Ride the colour temperature

Rather than relying on a pre-programmed white balance value (such as sunny or cloudy) to set your white balance, choose the K setting and learn to set your white balance to match the scene you are shooting. Higher values of K warm the scene up, whereas lower values cool your picture. It's a great idea to match your live-view screen to what you see, as this really helps to provide you with a great starting point when it comes to your processing.

KIT LIST

Really Right Stuff BH-55

There is no ballhead more sturdy or more heavyweight than this one. It's the most stable of platforms and is essential for my long-lens landscape work.

L-bracket

By keeping the centre of gravity over the centre of the tripod, the L-bracket ensures the most stable of images, whether you are using landscape or portrait orientation.

Levelling base

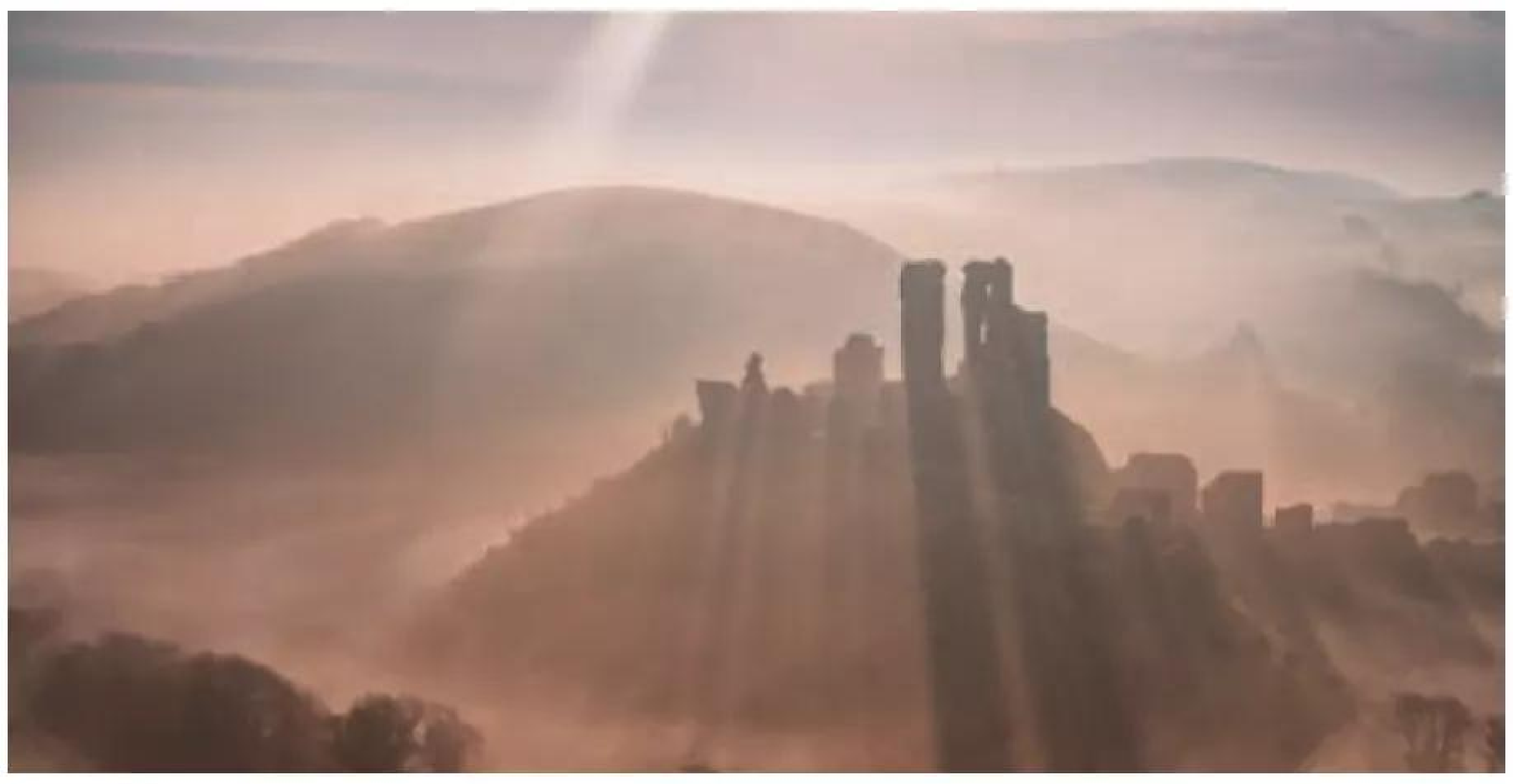
I'm a panoramaholic, so I use a levelling base – it ensures a flat plane of rotation in one motion, without all the faff of levelling the legs individually.

Mark Bauer

Mark Bauer has been a full-time professional landscape photographer since the early 2000s, supplying images for editorial and commercial use to clients around the world. He is the author of six books, and has won a number of awards in major competitions. Visit **www.markbauerphotography.com.**

Lighting

Reading and understanding natural light is fundamental to landscape photography

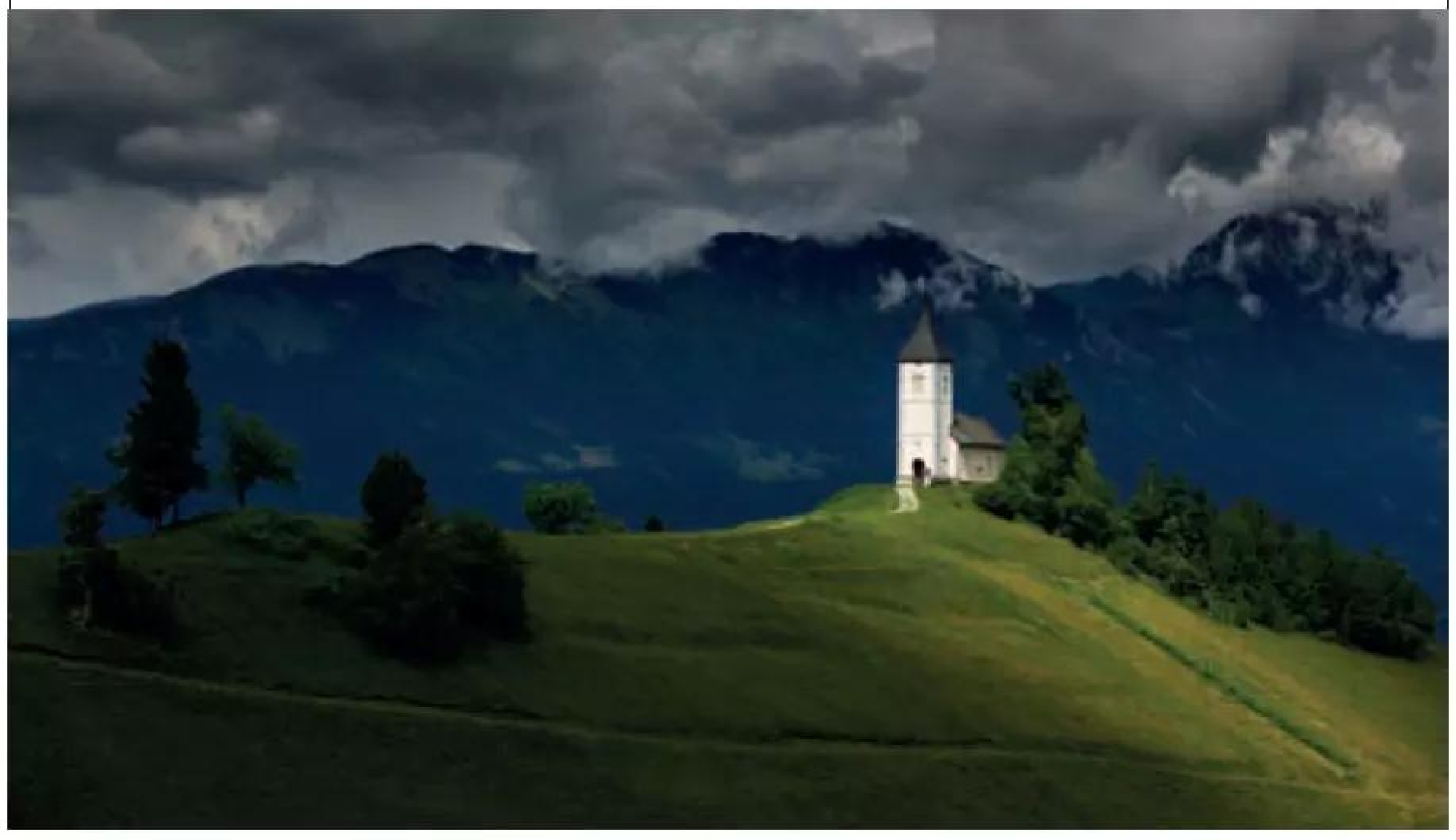


Use backlighting for drama

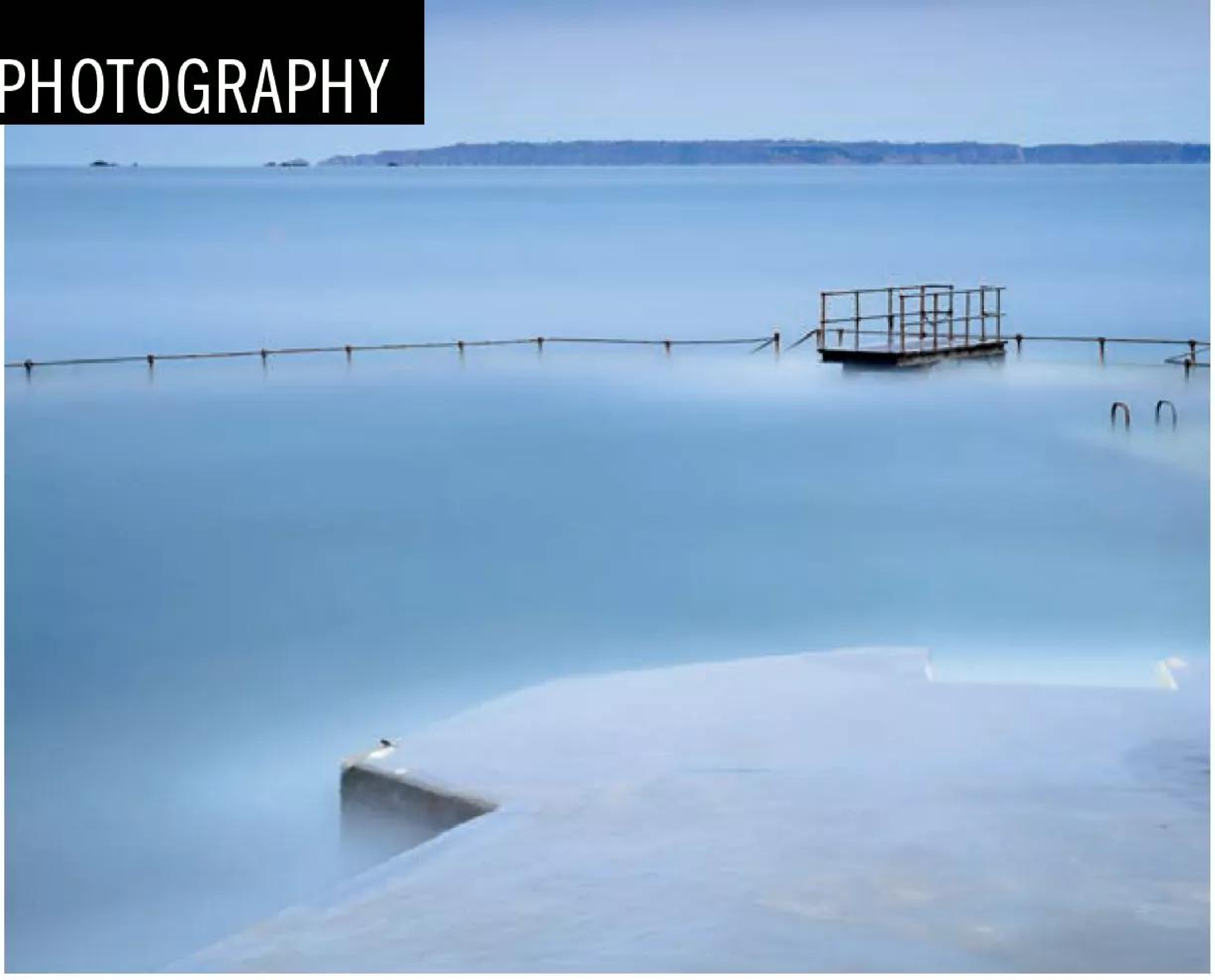
Shooting into the light – especially when the sun is low in the sky – can produce dramatic results, with shadows fanning out towards the camera and emphasis on shape and form. Choose bold, graphic compositions, and if there are strong shapes in the foreground, consider silhouetting them by metering from the bright sky. If you are not aiming to silhouette your subject, keep an eye on the histogram and be prepared to increase exposure, as backlighting can fool meters into underexposing. Flare is also a potential problem, so use your hand to shade your lens from the sun.

Dealing with midday sun

It's perfectly possible to shoot good landscapes in the less photogenic light of the day. Waiting for the right moment pays dividends. Clouds diffuse harsh sunlight, so shoot when the sun is covered or partially covered. On blustery days when the clouds are moving quickly, there is potential for dramatic light as the sun bursts through and creates a spotlight on the land below. In harsh light, consider shooting monochrome. Contrasty scenes containing deep shadows and bright highlights make good mono conversions with the right subject.

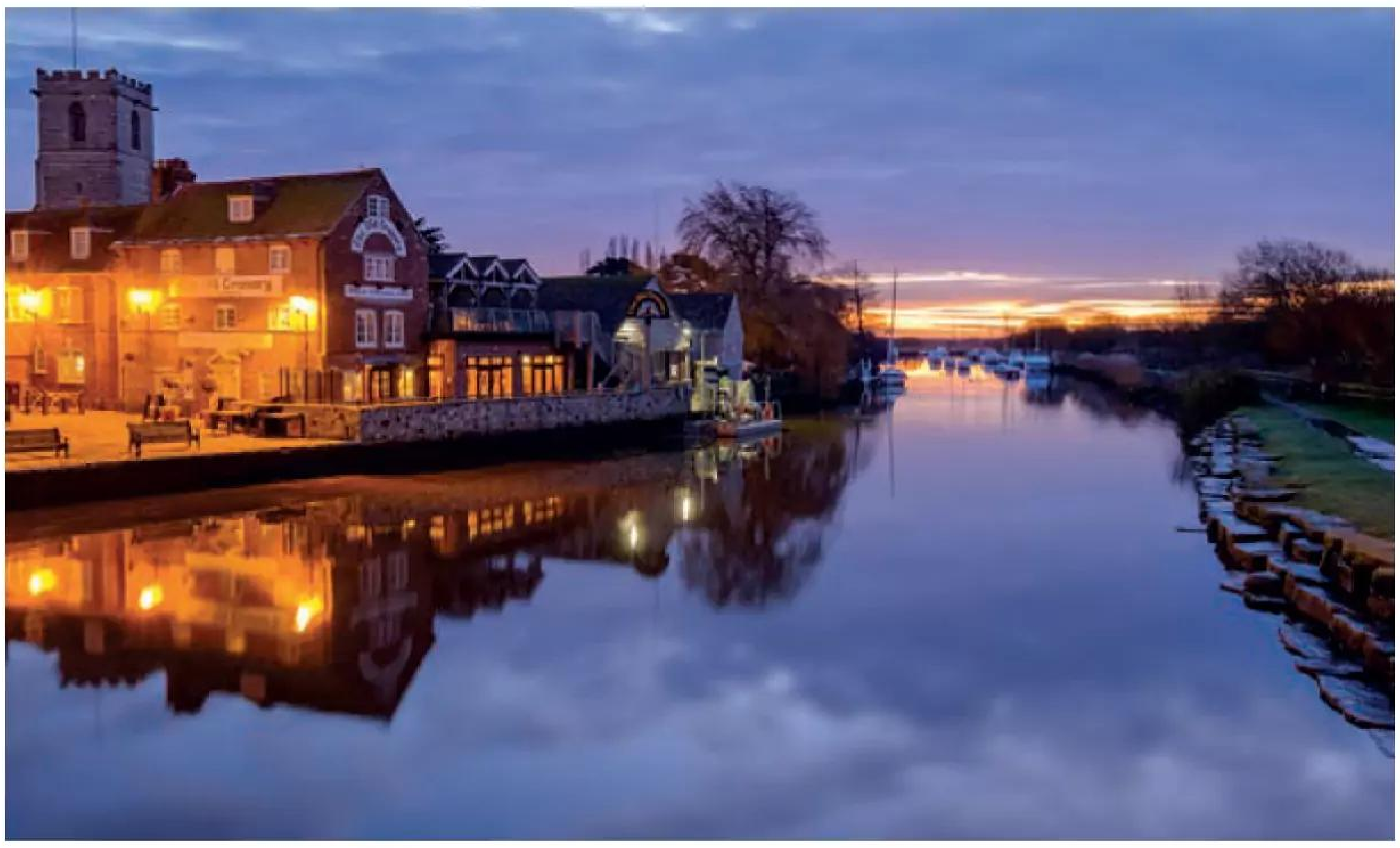


ALL PICTURES ON THESE PAGES © MARK BAUER



Make the most of dull light

On dull, overcast days, it can be tempting to stay at home and catch up on image processing, or sit on the sofa and read a book. But you're missing a trick if you don't head out with the camera, as this type of lighting can be incredibly productive. One option is to pack a set of neutral-density filters and head to the coast to shoot some long exposures. Keep compositions simple and exploit the negative space around your subject. Long-exposure minimalism works best when it highlights the contrast between a static subject and the moving elements around it.



The blue hour

Most photographers pack up as the colour drains from the sky after the golden hour. However, if you like moody, romantic landscapes, then you should stay around for the 'blue hour': the period of twilight when the residual sunlight takes on a blue hue. Alternatively, get to dawn shoots early for the morning blue hour. Cityscapes are a natural choice of subject, as the blue backdrop contrasts with artificial lighting. With rural landscapes, look for water as reflections make great foreground interest.

Transitional light

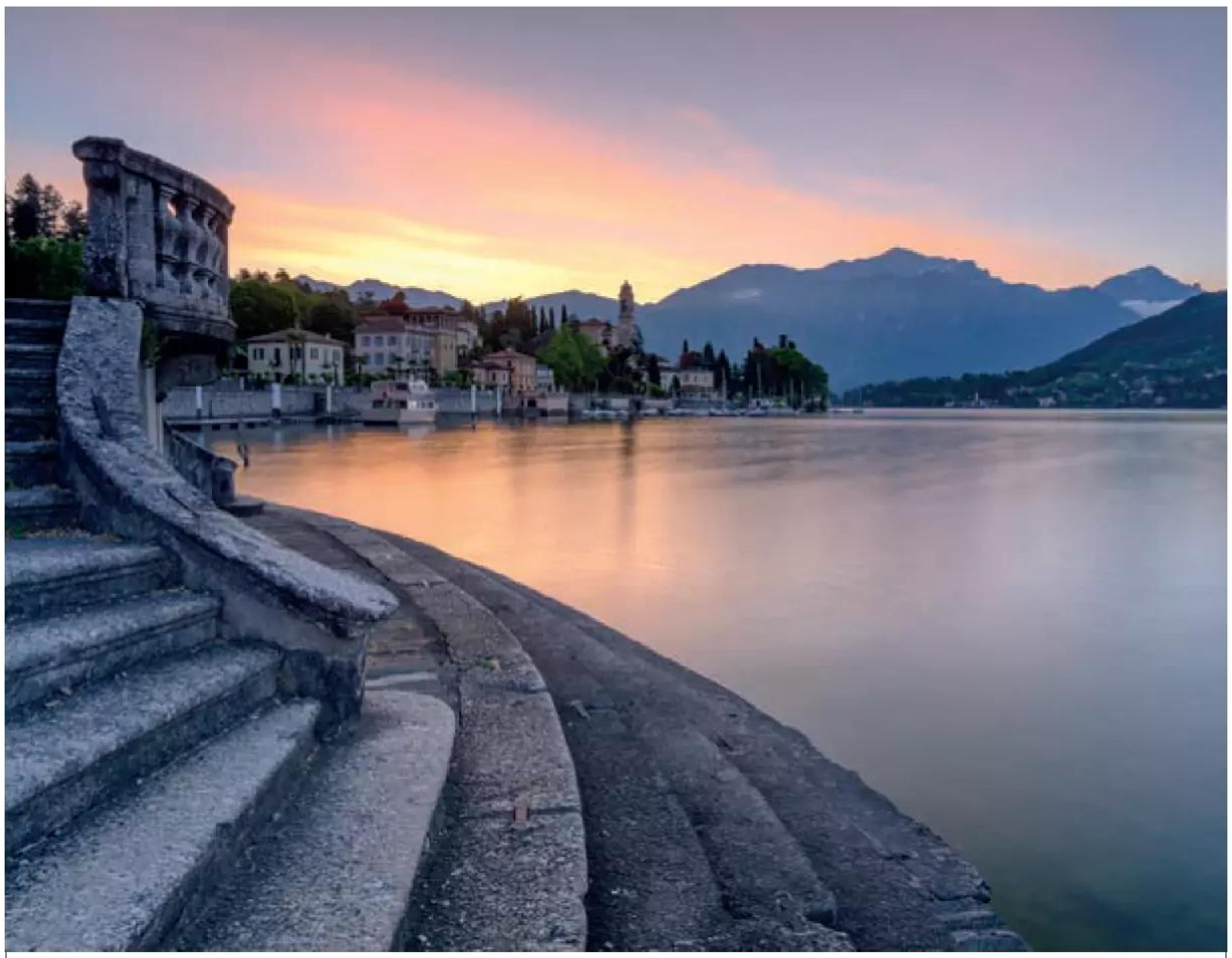
The most dramatic lighting for landscapes usually happens during the transition from one state to another – light to dark or vice versa, the transition from one season to another or as one weather front replaces another. Showery days are one of the best examples of this: as a shower passes and the sun breaks through, the light is dramatic with amazing clarity. The key to success is to anticipate the change and set up early – even if that means standing in the rain with your camera under a raincover. If you set up after the rain stops, you will miss the moment.

Focusing

Obtaining front-to-back sharpness doesn't need a maths degree, just a little patience

Differential focusing

Although we are used to the majority of landscape images exhibiting front-to-back sharpness in 'near-far' compositions, there is no rule to say all our landscapes have to follow this convention. In fact, by doing the opposite, you can make your images stand out from the crowd. Use a telephoto lens and open it up to maximum aperture to restrict depth of field, and then either throw the background or foreground out of focus to force attention onto your main subject. An out-of-focus foreground can make an effective frame for the subject and add a touch of impressionism.



Double distance focusing

The usual advice for maximising depth of field is to focus 'a third of the way in'. However, this is rather vague and doesn't guarantee good results when there is close foreground. Focusing on the hyperfocal distance is more precise, but if messing around with charts isn't your thing, try double distance focusing. Identify the nearest object in your composition that you want sharp, calculate its distance from the camera and then focus at double that distance. If you are shooting with a wideangle lens and a mid-to-small aperture, this technique will deliver front-to-back sharpness. To be sure, check the review image for depth of field.

Focus stacking

With very close foreground interest, even careful focusing may not get you enough depth of field. One option is to use tilt–shift lenses, but these are expensive optics. A cheaper alternative is to use a technique known as focus stacking. Take a series of shots, covering the scene from foreground to infinity, with depth of field overlapping from one shot to the next. These can then be blended in software into a single file with extensive depth of field. There are plenty of online tutorials to help you perfect the technique.

Back-button focus

Purists will try to insist that you focus manually, but autofocus is quick, convenient and accurate, so why ignore it? More important is to know where in the scene to focus and to make sure that focus is locked once achieved. Back-button focus enables this. Via a custom setting, most cameras allow you to assign one of the buttons as an 'AF-On' button and decouple focus from the shutter button. You then focus with the back (AF-On) button and when you press the shutter button, the camera does not refocus before opening the shutter.

KIT LIST

◀ Sun app

I use a sun position app, such as Sun Surveyor or Sun Seeker, in order to help me find when the best light is at a particular location.

◀ LEE filters

In my landscape photography arsenal is a set of LEE filters including various grads, neutral-density filters and a polariser.

◀ Raincover

I use chamois leather as a raincover to protect the camera from the elements and also for wiping kit down if it does get wet.

Winskill Stones in the Yorkshire Dales at sunset

Long exposure at the Fairy Glen near Betws-y-Coed, Snowdonia

Location, location,

If you've ever struggled to find the best locations for landscape photography, **James Abbott** shares great tips for being in the right place at the right time

There comes a time in every landscape photographer's journey when they outgrow their local patch and feel the pull of more distant locations. While having local spots to visit is essential to take advantage of last-minute weather conditions, travelling further afield will take you to amazing places that expand both your portfolio and your creativity.

The world is full of famous locations, and there are some that are so popular you're unlikely to ever have them to yourself at the optimum shooting time. The lone tree at Llyn Padarn in Llanberis, Wales, is one such location, and on a typical sunrise you can expect anywhere between four and 20 photographers to be lined up along the lakeshore. One reason for this could be simply that it's a truly iconic sunrise location, but the fact that you can park only a 30-second walk from the tree has to be a significant factor in its popularity.

ALL PICTURES © JAMES ABBOTT

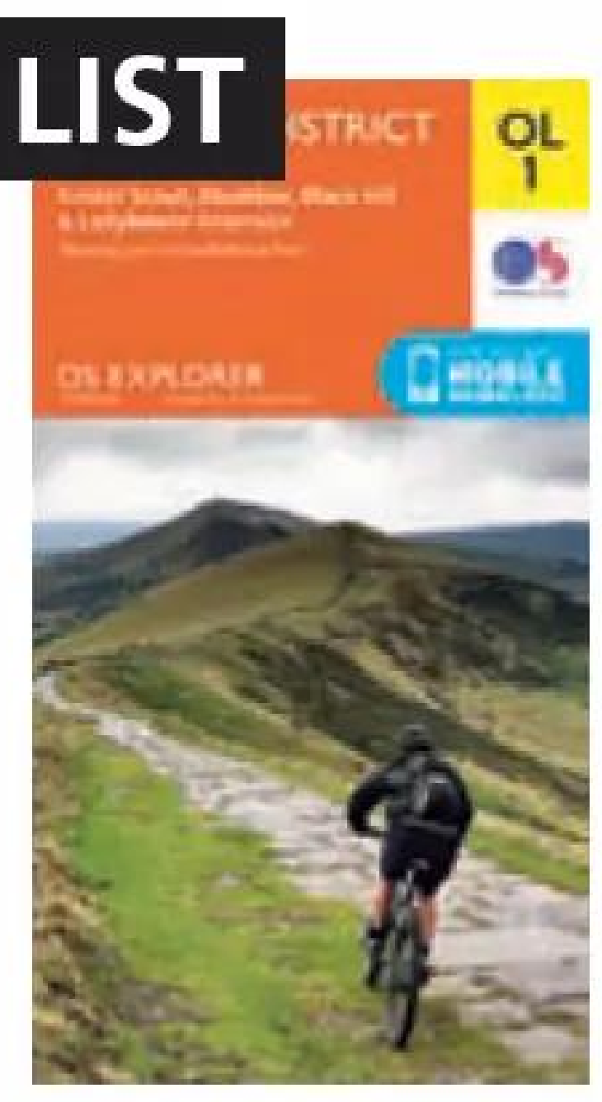
Finding locations

Finding famous and indeed lesser-known locations is easier than ever before, thanks to the internet and social media apps such as Instagram, where many photographers tag the locations of their images. The simplest way to discover new locations is to perform an internet search; you'll find blogs, outdoor/walking websites and sites such as www.shothotspot.com, which is a user-fed location-finding website.

Another option is to perform an image search based on a location or area, and while this may not necessarily show you great images, it could still provide inspiration and links to useful websites.

As photography increases in popularity,

KIT LIST



Paper maps

Even though many walkers and mountaineers now use digital mapping, a traditional paper map is essential in case of an emergency in more remote locations.

Compass

When using paper maps, you'll also need to have a traditional compass to aid in pinpointing your exact location and help you stay on track.

Sunrise at the lone tree on Llyn Padarn

Cloudy evening at Herringfleet Windmill in Suffolk

location

James Abbott

James is a landscape and portrait photographer based in Cambridge. He's also a freelance photography journalist and editor specialising in photography techniques, tutorials and reviews. See more of his work at **www.jamesaphoto.co.uk**

more and more location guidebooks are being published, covering much of the United Kingdom and further afield. The publisher fotoVUE and photographer Ellen Bowness (whose books are published by Long Valley Books) produce the best location guidebooks available and these provide an excellent starting point for exploring the UK with your camera.

It's safe to say, any location you can find in a book, on a website, or when using a search engine will be popular to varying degrees. If you can find reference to a place, you can be almost sure you're not the first person to discover it. So if you'd prefer to discover more unusual images, the only way to do so is to simply go out for a walk in an area that's known for the type of landscape you're interested in capturing.

You could use famous spots as a starting point, certainly, but do aim to take yourself away from the beaten track. And don't forget to look behind you as well – sometimes the best shot can be found when looking the other way. Not to mention, good old-fashioned luck should never be underestimated, and word of mouth can be invaluable.

Blackden Moor
Fords
Ford
Fords
Fords
Waterfall
Waterfalls
Fords
Rind

Discover hidden gems

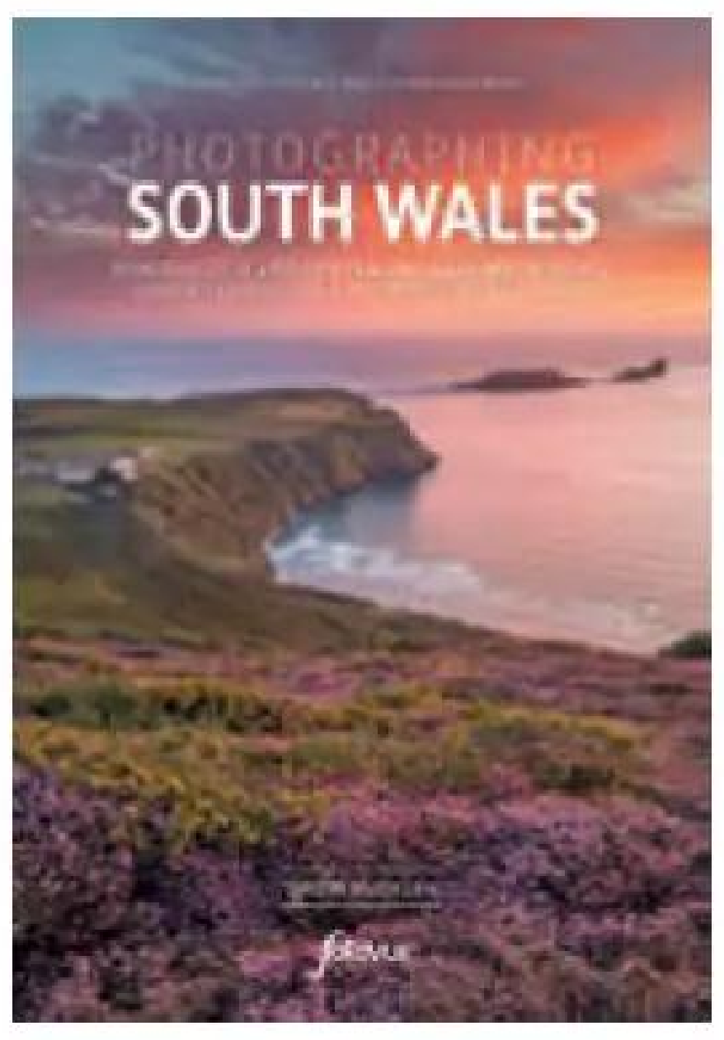
Traditional paper maps are a fantastic way of discovering locations that aren't well known, and they provide an excellent method of navigation when paired with a compass on location.

Simply scour the map for your preferred landscape feature, such as a waterfall, and look for public rights of way to check access without trespassing. Pay attention to the contours of the landscape to be sure you're physically able to reach it, and that it's safe. Google Maps in satellite view is a great secondary method of assessment.

Etrex 20x
Map
Where To?
Compass
Mark Waypoint
Trip Computer
Setup
GARMIN

◀ GPS device

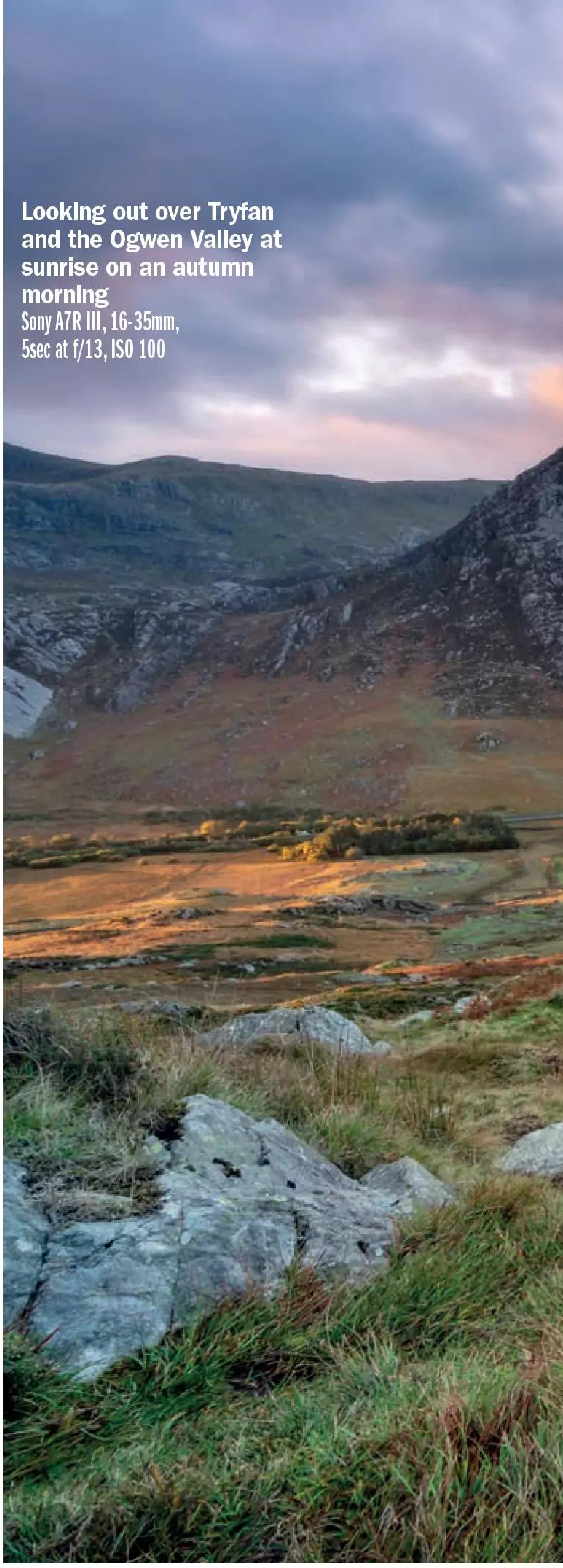
Digital mapping devices include smartwatches and standalone GPS devices; mapping phone apps make precise navigation a breeze.



◀ Photo guidebooks

Photography location guidebooks are a great way of finding both lesser-known and well-known locations in the UK and abroad.

Perfect winter reflection at Loch Cluanie in the Scottish Highlands
Sony A7R III, 16-35mm, 2.5sec at f/13, ISO 50

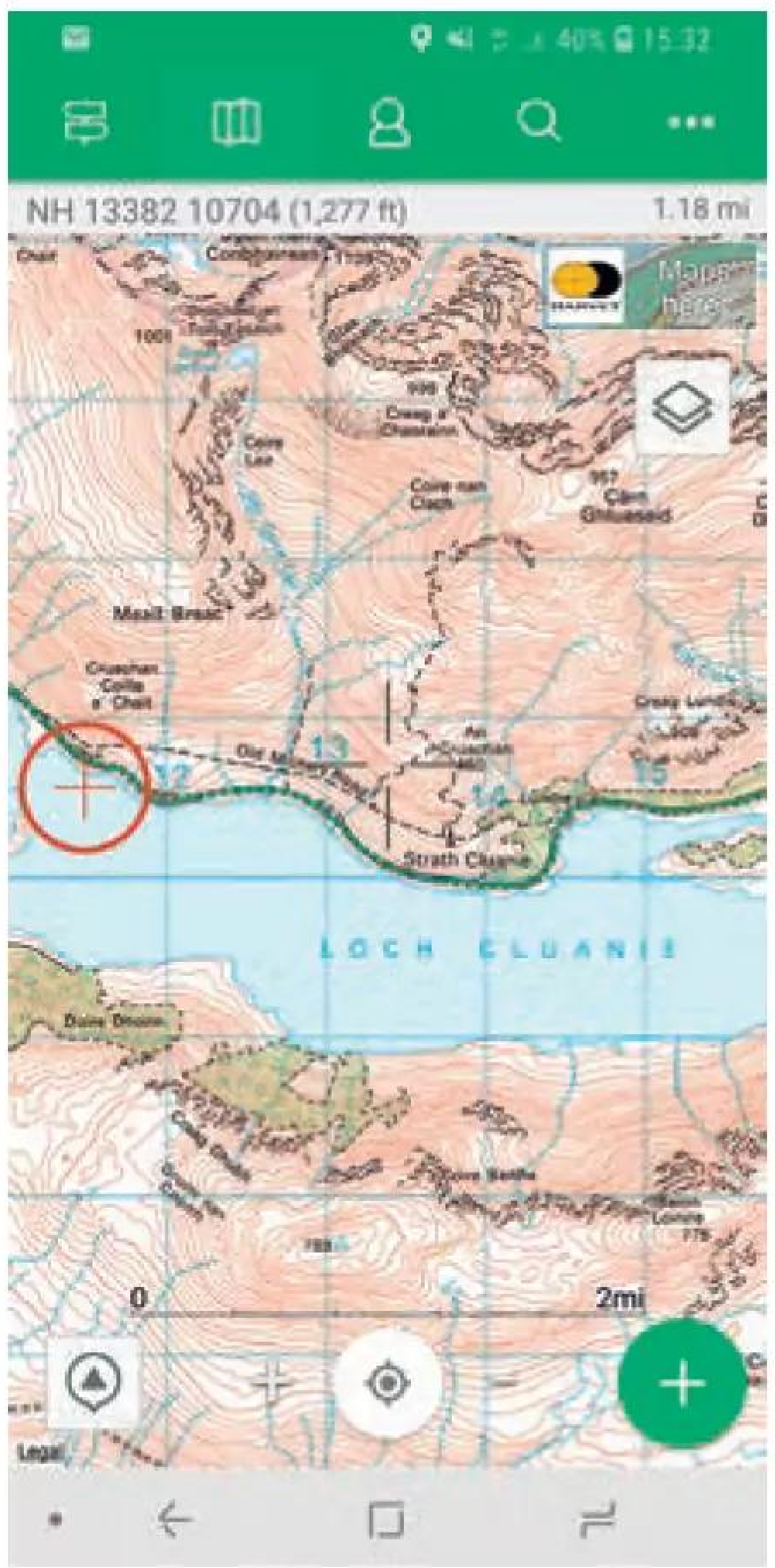


Looking out over Tryfan and the Ogwen Valley at sunrise on an autumn morning
Sony A7R III, 16-35mm, 5sec at f/13, ISO 100

Identifying a great find

There may be times when you stumble upon a great location in perfect conditions, so invariably you stop and take a few shots before continuing with your journey. In situations such as these, you may not know exactly where you are, but for landscape photography, it's important to know your location.

On a recent trip to Scotland, this happened when driving through the Highlands; the conditions on a loch were absolutely stunning and a stop off was essential in order to take advantage of mirror-perfect reflections and cloud in the valley. After taking a number of images, I used the ViewRanger app, with offline maps already downloaded, to identify the name of the loch using GPS to pinpoint the exact location so I could return to it in future.



Use the ViewRanger app to pinpoint an unknown location

One of the easiest aspects of landscape photography is arguably finding locations before you head out, thanks to guidebooks, maps and a range of websites. But finding the location itself for the first time may not be quite as easy, especially when you might be racing against the clock to be ready for sunrise or sunset.

Photography location guidebooks provide detailed directions, and often basic maps. However, if you're walking in the dark – before sunrise, say – it can be difficult to identify key markers on the route and navigate successfully using the guide alone. So how do you ensure you stay on track?

Navigation on location

The best way to learn the route to a location that's hidden away is to do a daytime recce before you intend to shoot. This way, you'll be able to see clearly and learn the route with ease. Of course, this isn't always possible because of time constraints, so you may have to simply arrive with extra time to spare and take a risk.

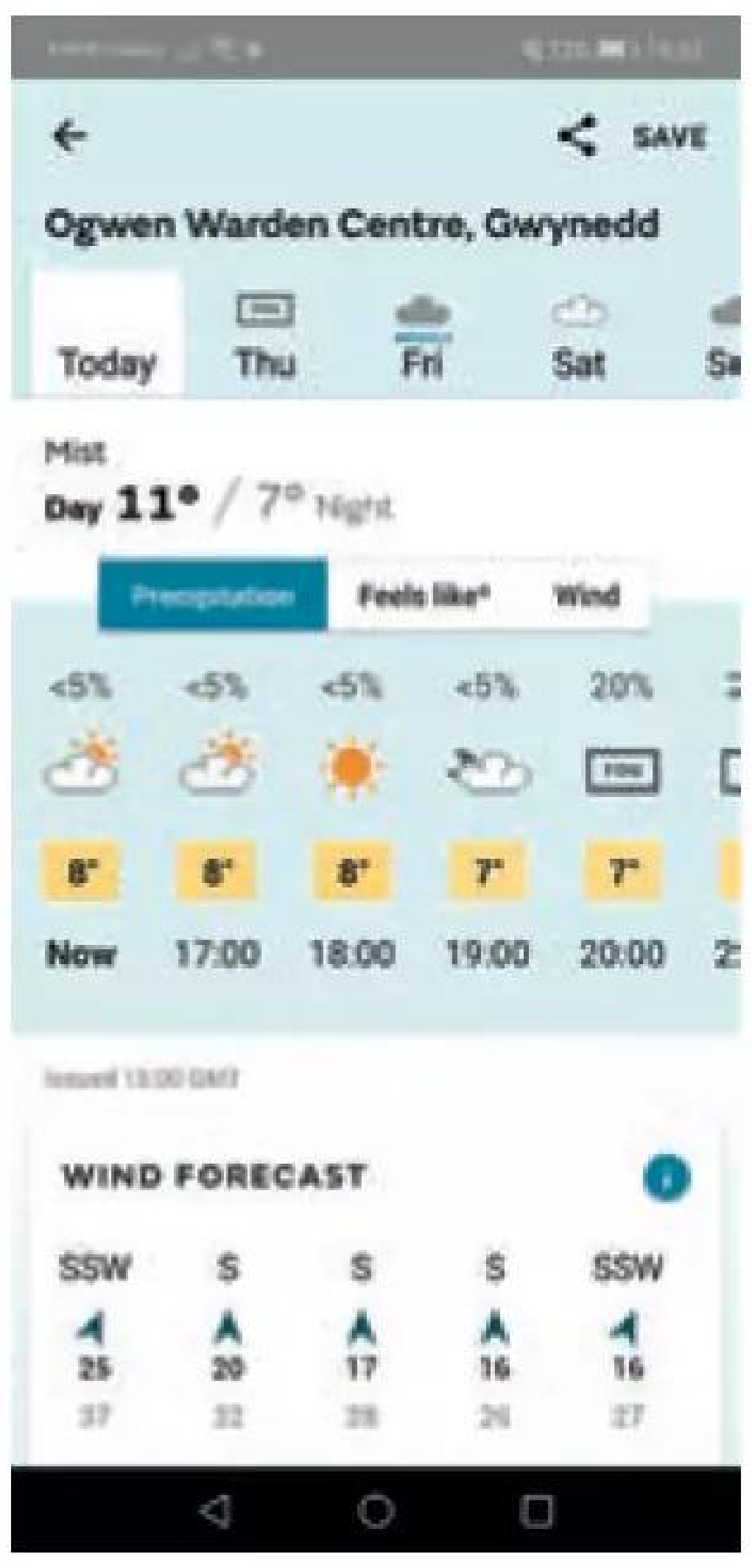
To mitigate the risk, it pays to plot a route using a paper or digital map service when you're at home, so you have at least some idea of the lay of the land and where you need to be heading. A better option, however, is to do this and to have a paper map or a digital map app on your smartphone or a smartwatch with mapping or even a dedicated GPS mapping device. Check out our round-up of the best digital mapping apps and devices opposite. Just be sure that you download offline maps when using a smartphone app such as OS Maps Premium or ViewRanger, to ensure mapping and navigation will continue in the absence of a mobile internet connection.

With these apps and devices, you can often plot routes before heading out and use live GPS to determine your position in relation to the planned route. An alternative is to download a GPX file from walking/hiking websites if one is available for your chosen location. A GPX file is simply a file format that stores recorded or created routes that can then be loaded into mapping apps and GPS devices, and will sit on the map when loaded so you can follow the route.

Tip: conserve battery

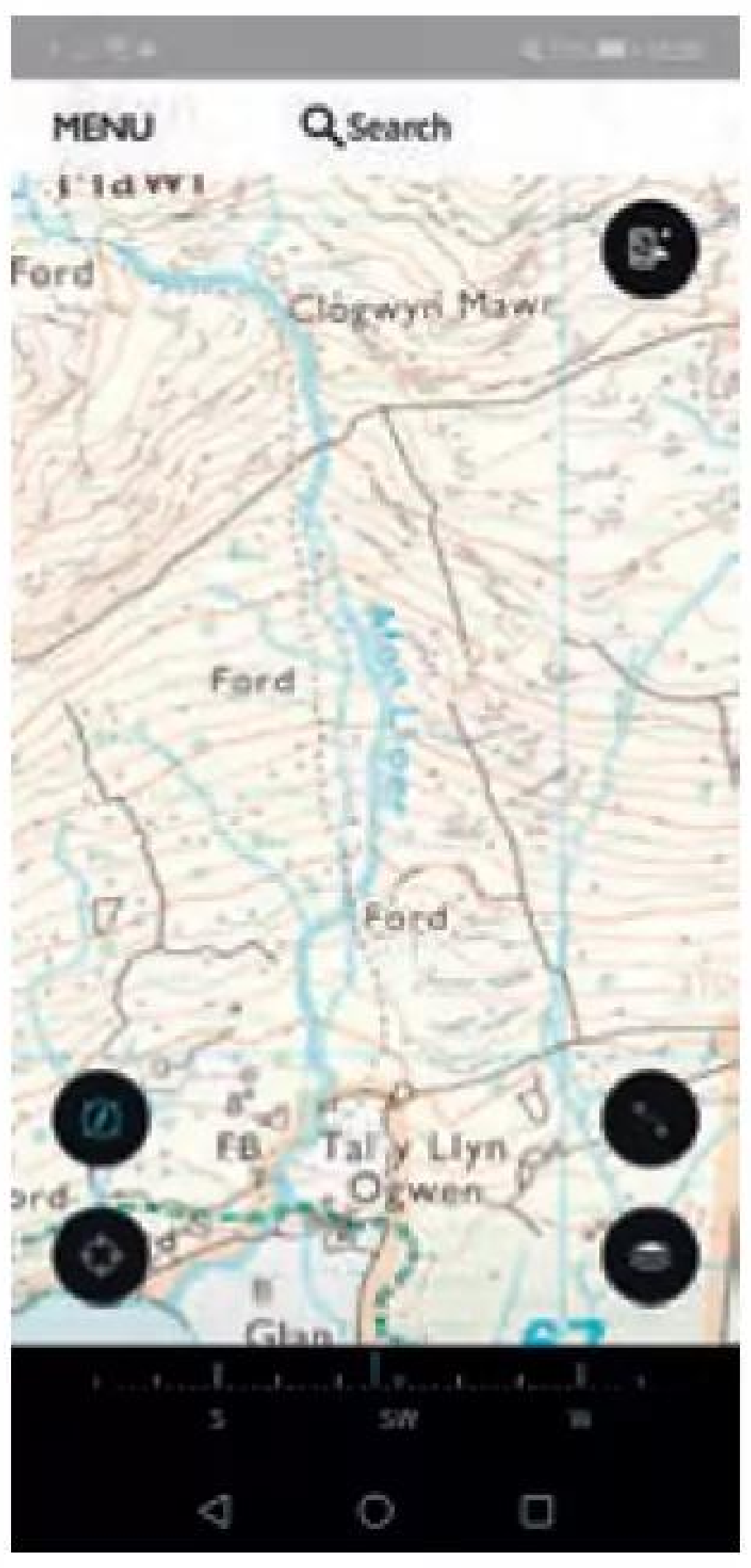
When using GPS mapping on your smartphone the battery will drain much faster than usual, so it's worth turning off GPS and checking your location every 15 minutes or so.

ESSENTIAL APPS FOR LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHERS


SAVE
Ogwen Warden Centre, Gwynedd
Today
Thu
Fri
Sat
Mist
Day 11° / 7° Night
Precipitation
Feels like*
Wind
<5%
<5%
<5%
<5%
20%
8°
8°
8°
7°
7°
Now
17:00
18:00
19:00
20:00
WIND FORECAST
SSW
S
S
S
SSW
25
20
17
16
16

The Photographer's Ephemeris

This is an app that can be used to plan shoots using Google Maps and sunrise and sunset guides so you know exactly where the sun will be positioned in relation to any location on earth. PhotoPills is a similar app, but offers much more functionality and is slightly more complicated to use.


MENU
Search
Clogwyn Mawr
Ford
Ford
Ford
Tal y Llyn Ogwen

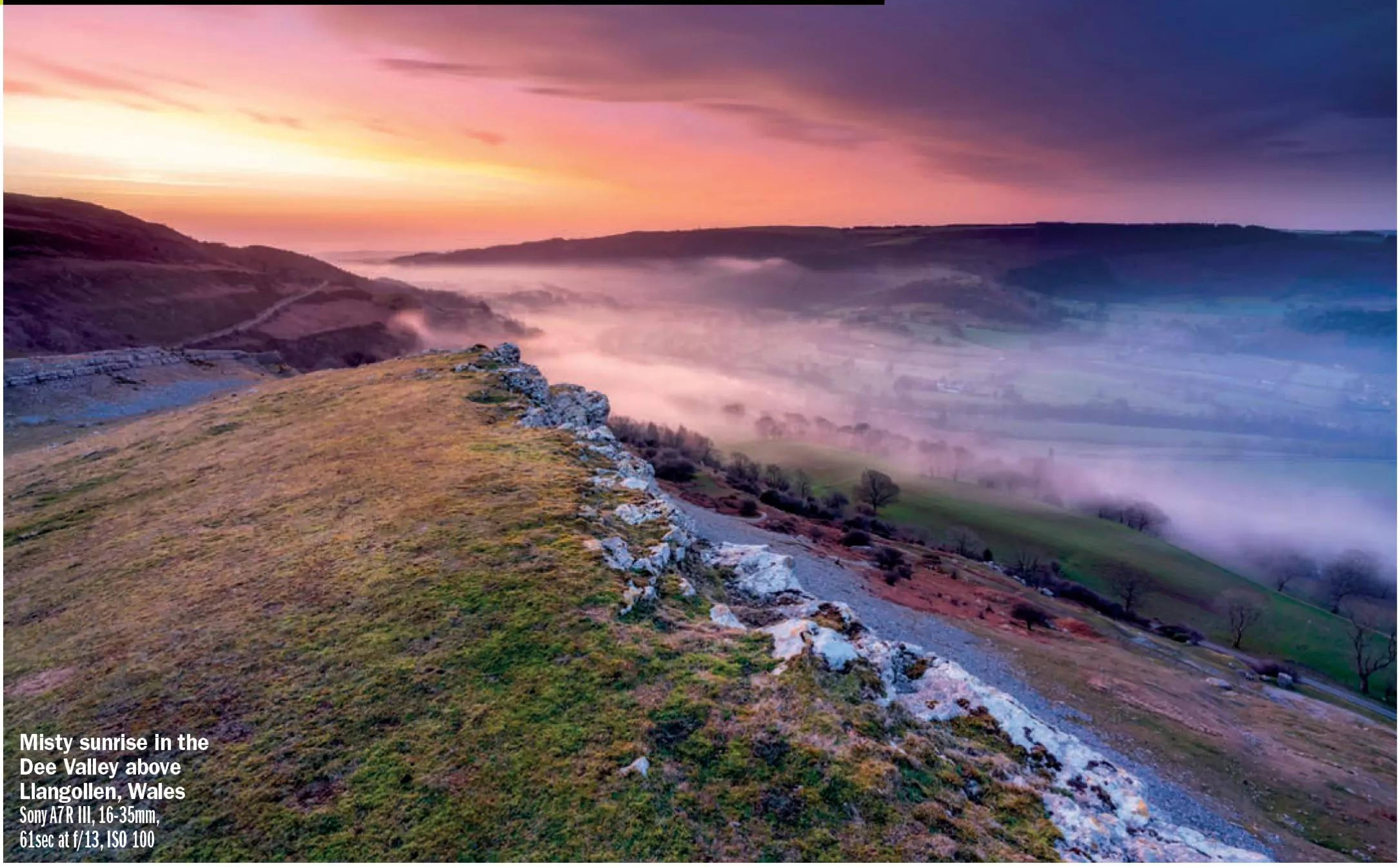
Met Office

The Met Office is one of many weather apps available to help you plan shoots according to weather conditions. The app provides an hourly breakdown of the weather on the day, with a five-day forecast available for advance planning. While no weather report is 100% reliable, it's always best to check.

TPE
Google
Sun
Moon

OS Maps Premium

The OS Maps app can be used for free, but to use offline maps that can be accessed whether or not you have a phone signal requires an OS Maps Premium subscription. This allows you to download the maps you need with the ability to import GPX files and load them into maps so you can follow the route it contains.



Misty sunrise in the Dee Valley above Llangollen, Wales
Sony A7R III, 16-35mm, 61sec at f/13, ISO 100

At some point or another, every landscape photographer will experience sunrises and sunsets that simply don't deliver despite meticulous location and weather planning. Nature plays by its own rules, and luck will always be a large part of the overall equation with a fine line dividing great images and those that end up getting deleted.

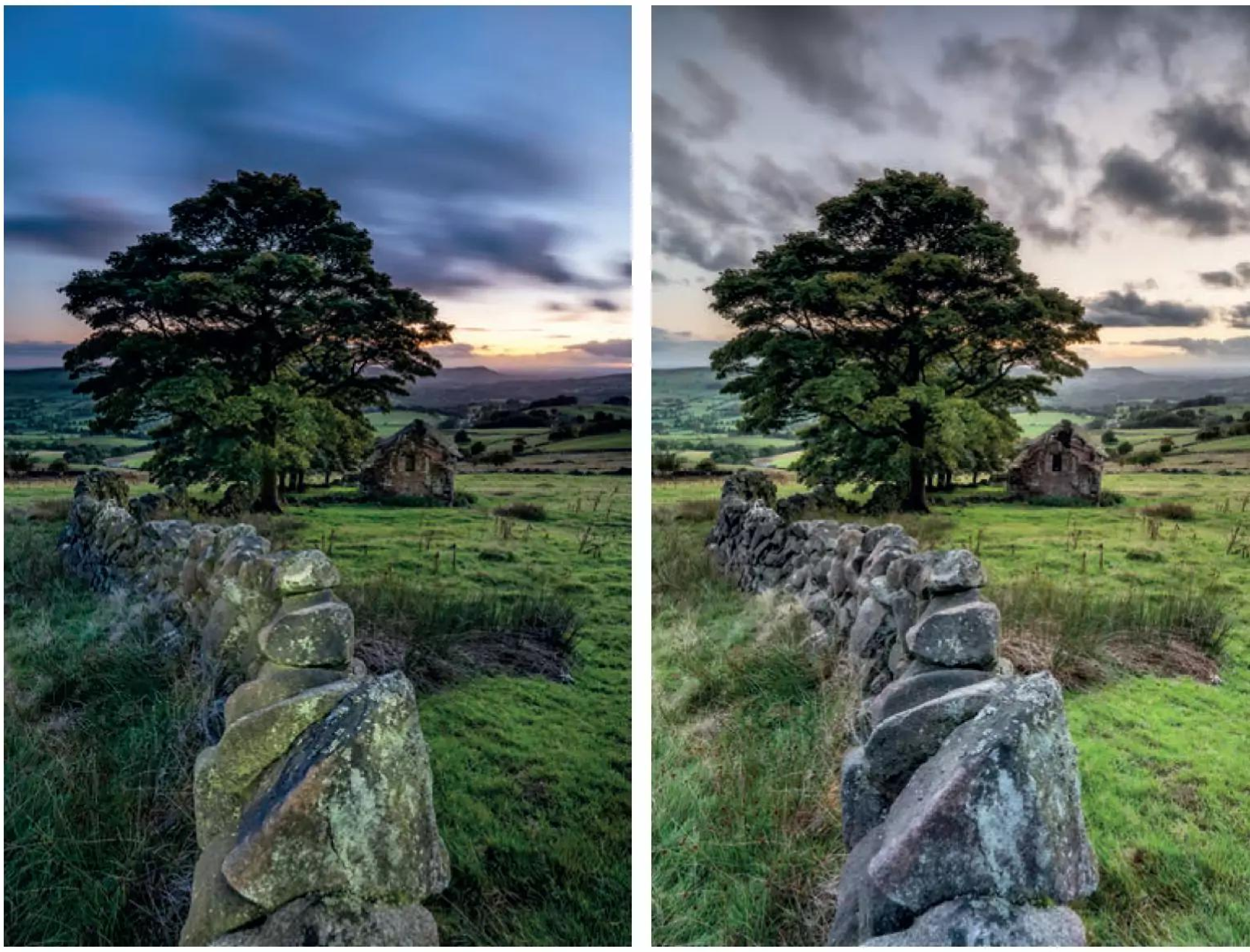
Respond to conditions

Weather and light are the most common make-or-break factors for landscape photography, so it's important to pay attention to the weather in the run-up to your planned shoot. The location in the image above was spotted during a shoot from a lower position the previous morning when the light was dull and the sky full of cloud.

That evening, the conditions and the weather report were suggesting that mist in the valley was highly likely, so I had to make a second visit. On the drive to the location it was hard to tell whether the mist had entered the valley, but once I was on the road leading to the parking area, the sky began to erupt with colour and the mist became visible. The result was a unique image, in the best possible conditions, of a location that's not particularly well known.

Revisit locations

Even when you have a great image of a location, whether it's lesser known or as famous as somewhere like Durdle Door, it's always worth revisiting in different conditions even if you happen to shoot a great image on your first visit. Variances in light, weather and the colour of foliage can make a huge difference despite the location remaining the same.



Roach End Barn at sunset (right) and same location at dusk using a long exposure and light painting

MISSED AN ISSUE?

COMPLETE YOUR COLLECTION

ORDER TODAY!

Amateur Photographer
Nik Collection 6
Fixed-lens cameras
When one lens is enough – the best bridge and compact cameras in every format
OM System 90mm Macro
Shoot. Repeat
First Look! The Sony Alpha 6700 is the company's best APS-C model yet

18 JULY 2023

COVER STORY Best fixed-lens cameras **INSIDE** OM System 90mm Macro field test, Nik Collection 6

Amateur Photographer
Leica M11 Monochrom
Birds on a budget
Capture great bird photos in your garden without breaking the bank
The world's best photos
Peter Gabriel 3
Nikkor Z 26mm f/2.8 Nikon's smallest and lightest full-frame lens on test

16 MAY 2023

COVER STORY Get great bird shots on a budget **INSIDE** Leica M11 Monochrom test, Nikon Z 26mm f/2.8

Amateur Photographer
Ma-Mamiya!
Master your smartphone camera
How to get better shots from the camera in your pocket
Sigma 16-28mm F2.8 DG DN | C
War in Ukraine
Laowa 10mm f/4 Cookie

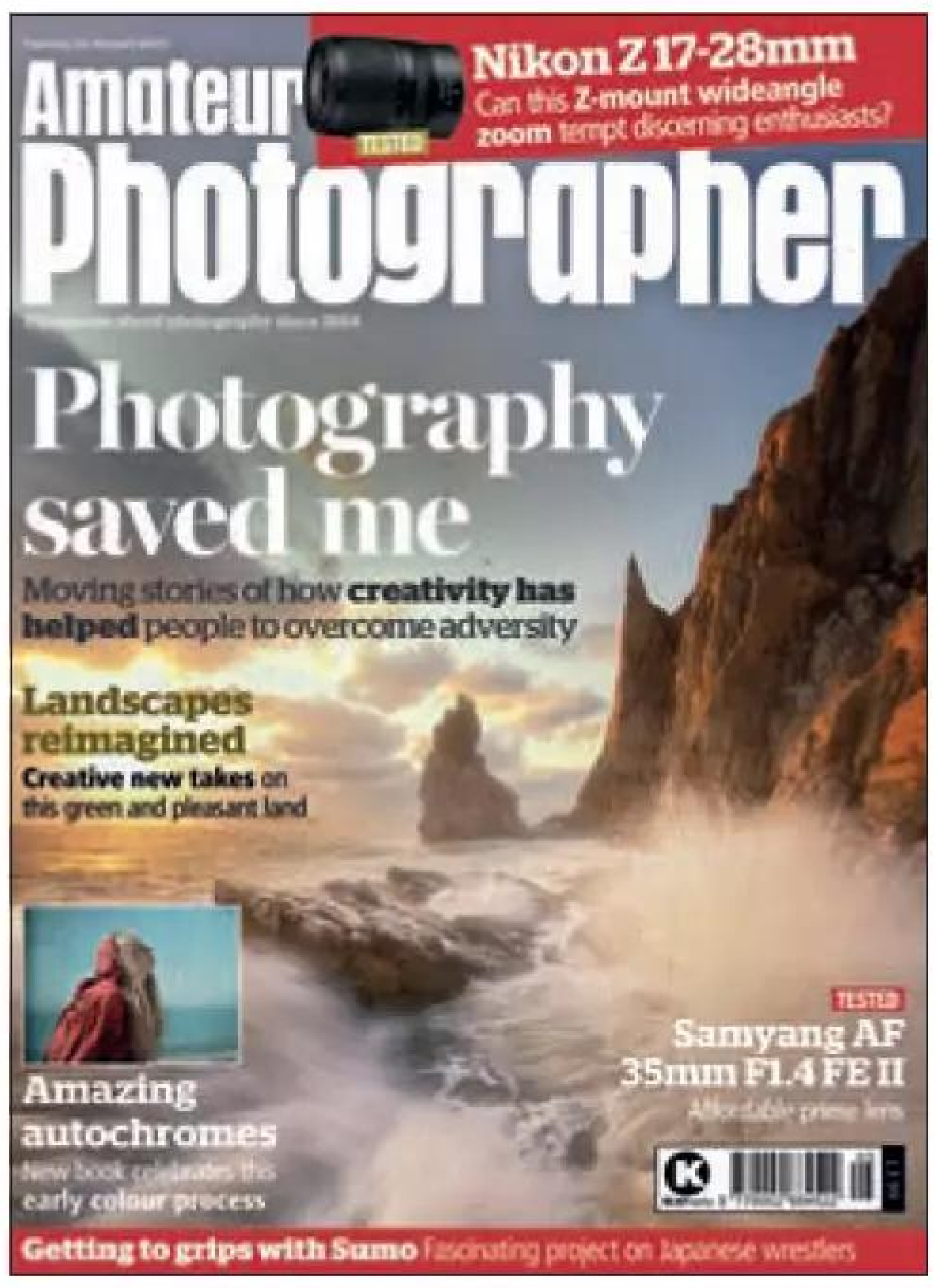
23 AUGUST 2022

COVER STORY Better shots from your phone **INSIDE** Master Intentional Camera Movement, classic Mamiyas

Amateur Photographer
PREMIUM EDITION
Macro special
Tips and inspiration for magical macro shots
30 EXPERT TIPS
MINIMAL EFFORT
MACRO SOFTWARE
Micro photography
Best macro phones
Readers' macro kit
Lens tests

11 APRIL 2023

COVER STORY 30 tips for sharp macro shots **INSIDE** Best software, phones for macro, lens tests


Amateur Photographer
Nikon Z 17-28mm
Photography saved me
Moving stories of how creativity has helped people to overcome adversity
Landscapes reimagined
Samyang AF 35mm F1.4 FE II
Amazing autochromes
Getting to grips with Sumo

24 JANUARY 2023

COVER STORY How photography has helped readers in tough times **INSIDE** Nikon Z lens, Samyang lens tests

Amateur Photographer
Tom Svensson
Best used bargains
Second-hand camera and lens combos that are out of this world
DSLR delights
Selling your kit
Lenses for mirrorless
Readers' buys
Bridge on a budget

31 JANUARY 2023

COVER STORY Best used camera and lens choices **INSIDE** Bargain used DSLRS, classic 35mm film SLRs

Amateur Photographer
Fabulous Five
Make the most of The coast
3 photographers share their tips for great photos of the sea
Focal planes
Leica Q3
Star quality

30 MAY 2023

COVER STORY Tips for dramatic seascapes **INSIDE** Airshow shots, David Hogan, Sigma 50mm f/2

Amateur Photographer
Canon EOS R7
Get more from mirrorless
Discover all the useful tools and functions designed to improve your photography
We ♥ mirrorless
The next generation
X rated?
Mirrorless lens buying guide

16 AUGUST 2022

COVER STORY Make the most of mirrorless **INSIDE** Damien Lovegrove portrait shoot, Canon EOS R7 review

Amateur Photographer
Fujifilm X-H2
Does size matter?
The pros and cons of every sensor format explained: which one is right for you?
Brian May
Loose Canons
Colorising B&W images

8 NOVEMBER 2022

COVER STORY Which sensor format is best for you **INSIDE** Using Adobe's AI tools, Fujifilm X-H2 tested, Brian May

Amateur Photographer
Get the film look
ANALOGUE SPECIAL
Fabulous film
Bumper issue dedicated to traditional photography
Roger Bamber
Sprocket man
Posh pinhole
Digitise your film

20 JUNE 2023

COVER STORY Tips for better film photography **INSIDE** Digitise your film negs, wet plate, Roger Bamber

Amateur Photographer
Seabird safari
Nikon Z 8
The ultimate all-rounder?
Our verdict on the hottest new camera of the year
Tutu
Mickey takers
America's urban wildlife

11 JULY 2023

COVER STORY Nikon Z 8 big review **INSIDE** Coastal birds, urban wildlife shots, Mickey Mouse-themed cameras

Amateur Photographer
Sigma 16mm F1.4
Summer light
Summer sun can be hard and unflattering. Here's how to use it to your advantage
From films to rolls of film
Lightroom masterclass
The 100 inch 'Peeping Tom'

12 JULY 2022

COVER STORY Pros share tips for shooting in summer light **INSIDE** Sigma 16mm F1.4, Lightroom tools

Visit shop.kelsey.co.uk/APB

Call the hotline 01959 543 747*

*Hotline open Mon – Fri 8.30am to 5.30pm. Calls charged at your standard network rate

or scan me!

Verity Milligan

Verity is a professional landscape photographer based in Birmingham. She has worked on campaigns for organisations such as Yorkshire Tea and Visit Britain. She's happiest when outdoors, and relishes the opportunity to connect with people, environments and cities. Visit **www.veritymilliganphotography.com**

To reduce the glare and make the rainbow pop, a polarising filter is the best option and one that Verity likes to use most of the time

Olympus E-M5 Mark II, 40-150mm, 1/60sec at f/14, ISO 200

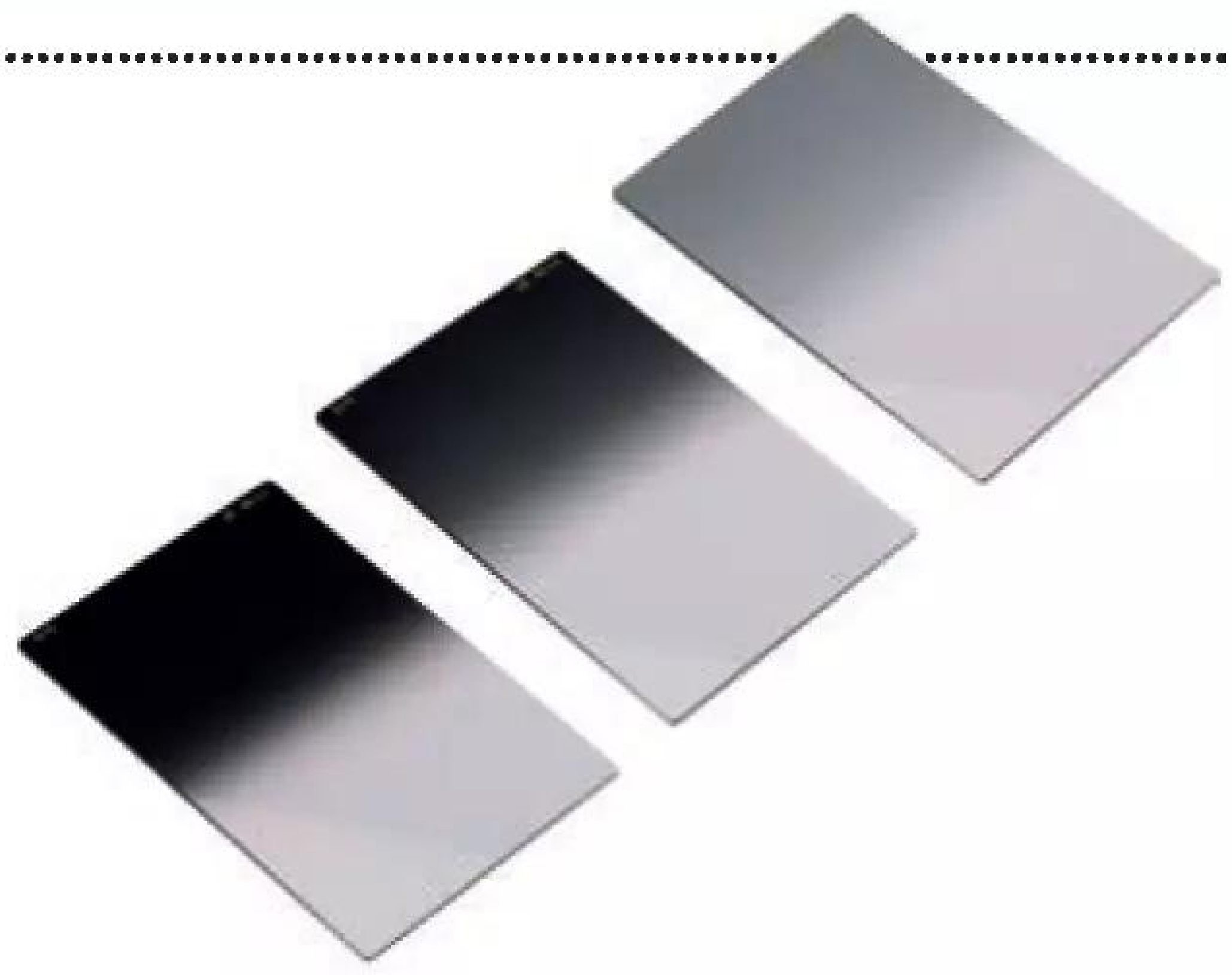
KIT LIST

Polariser

A polariser filter is a landscape photographer's best friend and will help reduce the glare from reflective surfaces, such as glass and water, and make your sky pop.

Neutral-density filter

Stop down your exposure time to make creative long exposures with this filter. These come in different strengths or you can also purchase variable ones (which tend to be lower quality but more versatile).



◀ **Neutral-density graduated filter** Match the exposure value of the sky to the ground by darkening it down with a grad. Although the square ND grads are easier to line up they also come in a screw design.

UNLESS STATED OTHERWISE, ALL PICTURES © VERITY MILLIGAN

The 3 magic filters

Verity Milligan shares why you only need three filters in your kit bag and how to get great results with them

When it comes to knowing what filters to have in your kit bag we've identified the key three: the neutral-density graduated (ND grad), neutral density (ND), and the polariser. Most professional landscape photographers use these filters at various times for many reasons, from trying to achieve a longer exposure to reducing the glare from a reflective surface. Different filters have alternative functions and there are so many of them on the market that sometimes it can feel overwhelming to know which ones to buy. However, if you stick with the key three, you'll get great results whatever the circumstances.

Landscape and professional photographer Verity Milligan uses the key three for her landscape and architectural work. 'I have LEE's new 100 filter system (which is at the pricier end of the scale), but previously I've used both Kase and Benro, which are all good.'

LEE Filters
Clear LEE
LEE 100
LEE 100

◀ **Full kit** If you want to take your filters seriously then be like Verity and invest in a full filter kit such as the LEE 100 filter kit. These don't come cheap, but if you take care of them they will last a lifetime and give superb results.

1 The ND Grad

A neutral-density graduated (ND Grad) filter is like an ND filter but with a gradual blend from dark on the top to clear at the bottom. The top part masks the sky, meaning the exposure time between the sky and land are reading closer exposure values. Verity says, 'I use graduated filters when I want to expose for the foreground and keep the correct exposure in the sky. They can be useful when shooting at the beginning or end of the day when the light is low, and it can be difficult to maintain good exposure in the foreground and the sky. They can also be very useful if I'm shooting in gloomy/stormy conditions.' She continues, 'The advantages of using a grad are the freedom it can give you to shoot in bright conditions and the control you have over the exposure. Sure, you can replicate it to a degree in post, but really this isn't ideal.'

In terms of disadvantages, Verity advises you should be careful regarding what situations you deploy them in. 'For example', she continues, 'if you're shooting a mountain range with an uneven horizon, you can inadvertently end up darkening the mountain peaks and unbalancing the overall exposure.'

Graduated filters come in various strengths and in a soft or hard blend. With soft grads, the transition from dark to clear is very gradual, whereas the hard has a much more defined edge. The scene being photographed will dictate whether you use the hard or a soft version. Verity, for the most part, tends to opt for soft grads rather than hard because they are a little more forgiving with landscapes. 'However,' she says, 'hard grads can be very useful and effective if you have a defined horizon, for instance, if you're shooting a seascape.'

Finally, when asked if she ever stacks neutral-density grads, she replies, 'I tend not to because it can mean that the sky is almost too dark, and it ends up looking surreal.'

The distinctive exterior of the Selfridges building in Birmingham's Bullring shopping centre shot with a neutral-density filter to create this particularly moody and atmospheric image

2 The ND filter

A neutral-density (ND filter) differs from a grad, in that the whole filter is coated evenly with dye. They come in a range of strengths (measured in stops), and there's also the option of a variable ND, which can be rotated to reduce or increase the strength. The quality of these tends to not be as good as single-strength NDs, however.

Verity says, 'An ND filter is ideal for revealing movement in an image. This is particularly useful when I'm shooting architecture and I want to make the imagery more stylised. It's also excellent for seascapes.

'An ND also gives an image form. It can be difficult to tell a narrative through a single image, so a sense of movement can be very useful. However, ND filters can be tricky. First, you can find yourself guessing at the time, especially if it's longer than five minutes. I advise using an app to calculate the timings. Secondly, you can get light leaks through the viewfinder, which can end up ruining a long exposure.'

An ND graduated filter enhances this heavy sky and adds atmosphere

3 The polariser

Finally the polariser is Verity's favourite and the one she opts for most of the time. 'For me, a polariser is an essential piece of kit for a landscape photographer. The LEE polariser I use has the advantage of warming up the image, but it also makes the colours pop. It can also be extremely useful for pulling out reflections from bodies of water and reducing reflections if I'm photographing a building.'

As with the ND and ND grads, there are advantages and disadvantages to using a polariser, as Verity explains. 'A polarising filter ensures you have more control of the landscape in front of you, and it opens up the possibility of exploring the scene in a different way. However, they can also be difficult to control. If your polariser is in the wrong position, you could end up with the sky looking rather strange, and if you're using one that is attached to a filter holder it creates a small space between the lens and filter which can increase the risk of lens flare if you're shooting into the light.'

Verity achieved this ethereal image of Derwentwater by using a polariser

Verity's top filter tips

1 Clean regularly

It can be endlessly frustrating when you get home from a shoot and realise that you've got lens flare and spots all over that killer image because you haven't bothered to make sure the filters were clean. When mounting them on to your camera be careful not to leave any fingerprints.

2 Less is more

When it comes to graduated filters, I find that less is more. I tend to use a 0.3 or a 0.6 rather than a 0.9 or 1.2. This gives me greater control over the feel of the image and I can always work on the exposure more in post. But if the sky is too dark, then I'm limited to what I can do without creating unnecessary noise in the image.

3 Buying

When buying an ND or ND grad filter I would recommend picking up the 100mm square versions that sit in a filter holder. This provides much more versatility and you can use it in conjunction with other filters such as a polariser. Although the screw-in ND filters are much cheaper, you need to buy one for each lens filter size and this could end up more costly.

4 Use wisely

When you first get your hands on ND filters, it can be exciting and you may wish to use them immediately. However, there are certain situations where they are more effective, such as when you're by the coast or on a particularly windy day. Also, you don't have to take a really long exposure; sometimes even a one-second long exposure can create an interesting result.

5 Enhance reflections

Polarising filters can help to get the most out of an image. I'm a fan of using one to enhance the reflections in a scene, especially if I'm shooting next to a lake on a still, misty morning. They can also be extremely useful when capturing images of the coast as you can use them to remove reflections on damp rocks and create a rather interesting foreground. Stacked with other filters, they can help create something extraordinary out of the ordinary. They're also brilliant for pulling out all the colours of a rainbow, if you're lucky enough to find one!

Most professional photographers use the filter holder system

© GETTY IMAGES / DIMITRIS66

Some filters screw directly onto the end of the lens

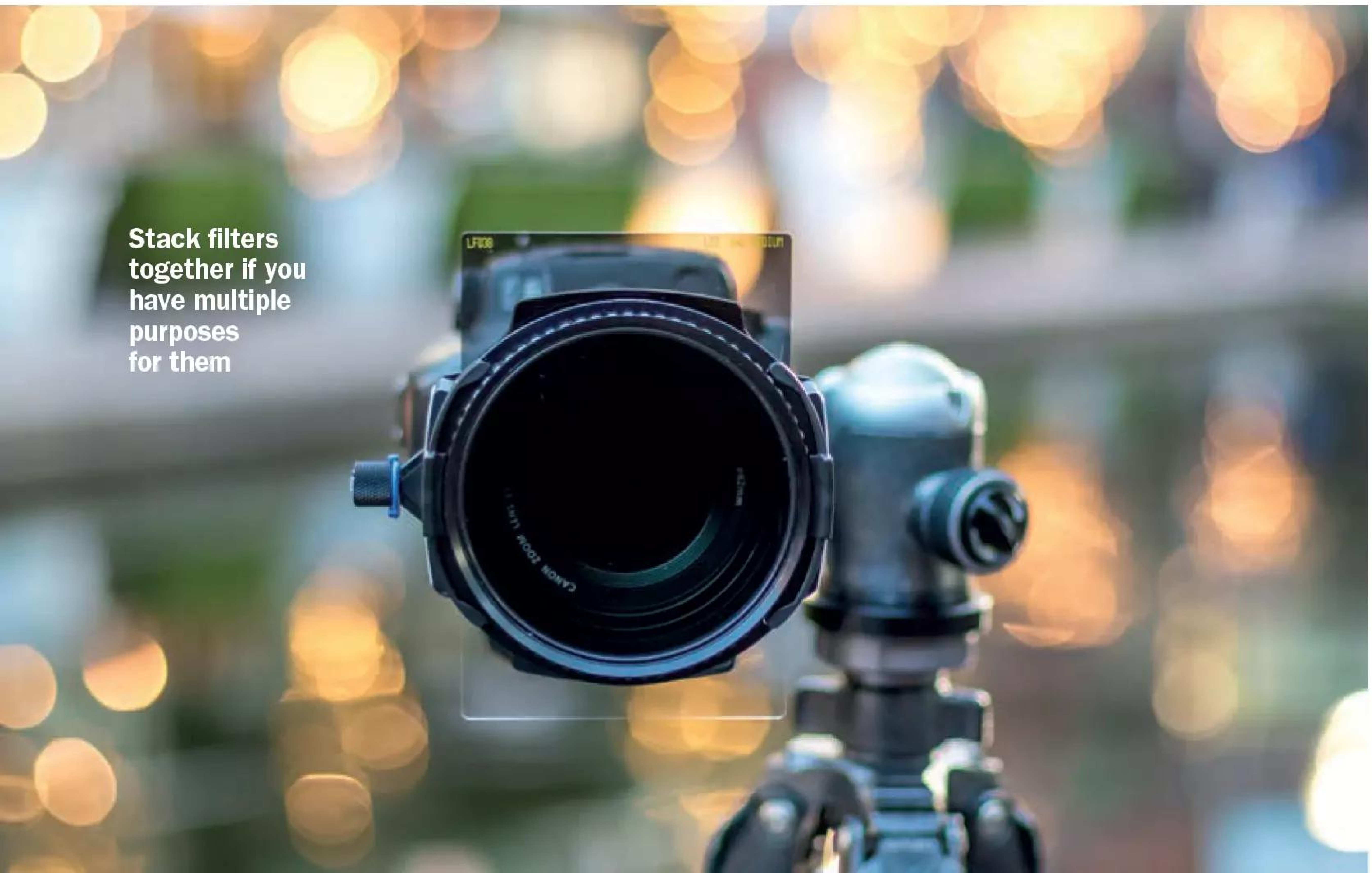
Filter systems

When it comes to investing in a filter there are two main systems to consider. You can either opt for a circular filter, which screws on to your lens, or a square filter, which slots into a filter holder that attaches to the front of the lens. Most professionals use the holder system, as it can be more versatile and easier to stack filters on top of each other, but they tend to be more expensive (although higher quality). To attach the holder on to your lens, you'll need an adapter ring, which threads on to your lens and then fits to the holder. You'll need to buy the correct size adapter ring for each of your lenses. The lens thread size is measured in mm; for example, 58mm, 67mm, 77mm and 82mm are all common sizes.

The second system is a circular screw filter that threads straight on to your lens. Again, you'll need to buy the filter in the correct thread size for your lens. You can also purchase step-up and step-down rings if you have multiple lenses with different thread sizes and want to attach the same filter. We recommend you purchase the filter that fits the largest thread size of your lenses,and use step-down rings to fit accordingly. If you step-up, you run the risk of seeing the edge of the filter in the field of view.

77mm TO 72mm STEP DOWN RING
72mm TO 67mm STEP DOWN RING
67mm TO 62mm STEP DOWN RING
62mm TO 58mm STEP DOWN RING
58mm TO 55mm STEP DOWN RING
55mm TO 52mm STEP DOWN RING
52mm TO 49mm STEP DOWN RING

Step-up and step-down rings are useful for adapting one filter to different sized threads



Stack filters together if you have multiple purposes for them

Stacking filters

If you find that you need a longer exposure time than your ND filter is capable of, you can stack them together. Verity advises, 'If I want to have an extremely long exposure and there is a lot of light, then I will stack ND filters (usually a 6-stop and a 10-stop), but this can lead to long exposure times and I'm not the most patient of photographers!' However, it's not just ND filters you can stack together – you can also mix them up, as Verity explains: 'I'm much more likely to stack an ND grad with other filters such as a polariser, as both have a specific, separate purpose when I'm capturing an image.'

Using a grad for this shot of Loch Sligachan helps balance the exposure between sky and foreground Canon EOS 5D Mark III, TS-E24mm, 1/25sec at f/11, ISO 100

A polariser cuts through the sheen on the foreground rocks, and removes glare, giving extra depth to the image

Using wide

James Paterson explains why wideangle lenses are so useful, how to get the most out of them, and when to go wide

Lighthouse of Cap de Formentor, Mallorca, Balearic Islands, Spain, around sunset
Nikon D810, 20mm, 1/8sec at f/16, ISO 64

© GETTY IMAGES/ALLARD SCHAGER

KIT LIST

Prime wides

Usually fixed at either 14mm, 20mm, 24mm, 28mm or 35mm, prime wides are typically sharper and faster than zooms, but with a trade-off in versatility.

Fisheye

Covering 180° or more, a fisheye is a special type of wideangle that offers a huge field of view and characteristic bulging distortion.

angles

A wideangle lens is one of the most useful lenses you can own. By offering a greater field of view, wideangles let you fit more into a frame. As such, they're beloved by landscape photographers, where big skies, dramatic scenery and interesting foregrounds can all be included in a single, detail-rich frame.

But it's not only landscape photographers who can reap the rewards of a wideangle lens. They're useful for all kinds of applications, from architectural and interior photography to travel and environmental portraiture. Over the next few pages, we'll explore some of the key considerations when using a wideangle lens, including how to get the most out of them, how to overcome common problems and how to create expansive photos of all kinds of subjects.

The basics

Typically, any lens with a focal length of 35mm or less is classed as a wideangle (that's full frame 35mm, which is an equivalent 23mm on an APS-C sensor camera). The shorter the focal length, the wider the field of view. Of course, many multi-purpose zooms can be used as a wideangle at the short end. Lower focal lengths result in wider fields of view, so you can fit more of the scene in the frame. As such, a wideangle is handy when you simply can't get back far enough to include everything you want.

Focal length also has an effect on the sharpness of your photos. Depth of field is exaggerated with a wideangle. So you can usually achieve front-to-back sharpness across the scene when using a narrow aperture. What's more, wideangles will usually have a close minimum-focusing distance, which means you can get right up close to your subject, giving the impression of being right in the thick of the action.

Wide landscapes

One of the best things about a wideangle is the ability it gives you to include a detailed foreground, distant scenery and big sky all in

A wideangle helps to exaggerate perspectives
Nikon D800, 16mm, 2.5sec at f/16, ISO 100

© JAMES PATERSON

James Paterson

James is an award-winning journalist, skilled photo editor and photographer. His work has appeared in countless magazines and books, and in 2014, he was appointed editor of *Practical Photoshop* magazine. To see more of his work, visit **www.patersonphotos.com**.

◀ Zooms

Wideangle zooms offer greater flexibility than primes, especially when composing a frame to arrange both foreground and background neatly.

◀ Tripod

A tripod is especially useful for wideangle photography as it gives you time to perfect your composition and allows for longer exposures.

© GETTY IMAGES/DANIEL BOSMA

Basalt columns, Giant's Causeway, Northern Ireland

one frame. However, with such a wide field of view, it can be a challenge to find enough interesting objects to place within it. Landscape photographers will often seek out foreground interest – an interesting rock formation, tree or winding river – that leads the eye towards the distant scenery. It's this challenge of finding harmony between foreground, background and sky that makes wideangle landscape photography such a rewarding pursuit.

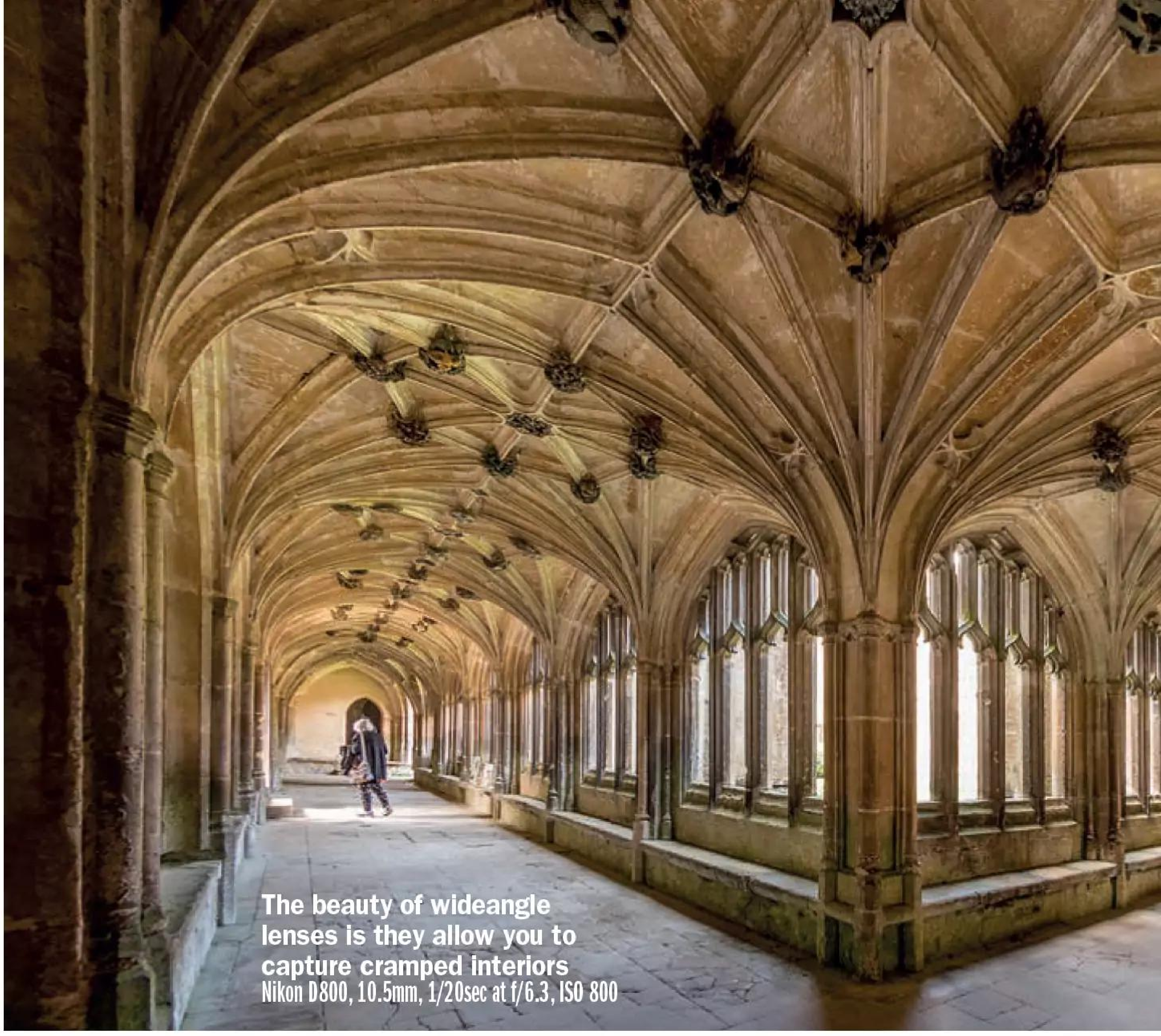
Exaggerated perspectives

A wideangle of view could be invaluable in situations where you can't move back far enough to fit everything in with a longer lens. However, there are also more creative applications. A wideangle will help you to exaggerate perspectives, because they change the visual relationship between objects that are closer to the camera and those that are further away. Closer objects can appear unnaturally large, while the distance between them and objects further from the camera is exaggerated. We can use this to creative effect by bringing our lens up close to elements and surfaces in our scene.

Wideangle challenges

When using a wideangle lens it can be tricky to craft an uncluttered composition. By nature, these lenses let you fit more things in, which can sometimes make it harder to organise everything into a visually pleasing whole. The exaggerated perspective also means that slight changes in camera height can make a dramatic difference to the relationship between foreground and background in your compositions.

It helps to pay particular attention to the edges of the frame, as unwanted clutter can easily creep in. A tripod can help us take a more studied approach to composition. While we're thinking about the edges of the frame, we also need to be cautious about placing subjects near the edges, especially around the corners. Distortion in the corners of the frame is more pronounced, so people can be stretched into unnatural shapes.



The beauty of wideangle lenses is they allow you to capture cramped interiors
Nikon D800, 10.5mm, 1/20sec at f/6.3, ISO 800

Get more from your wideangle

A wideangle can be a good choice for all kinds of subjects

Portraits

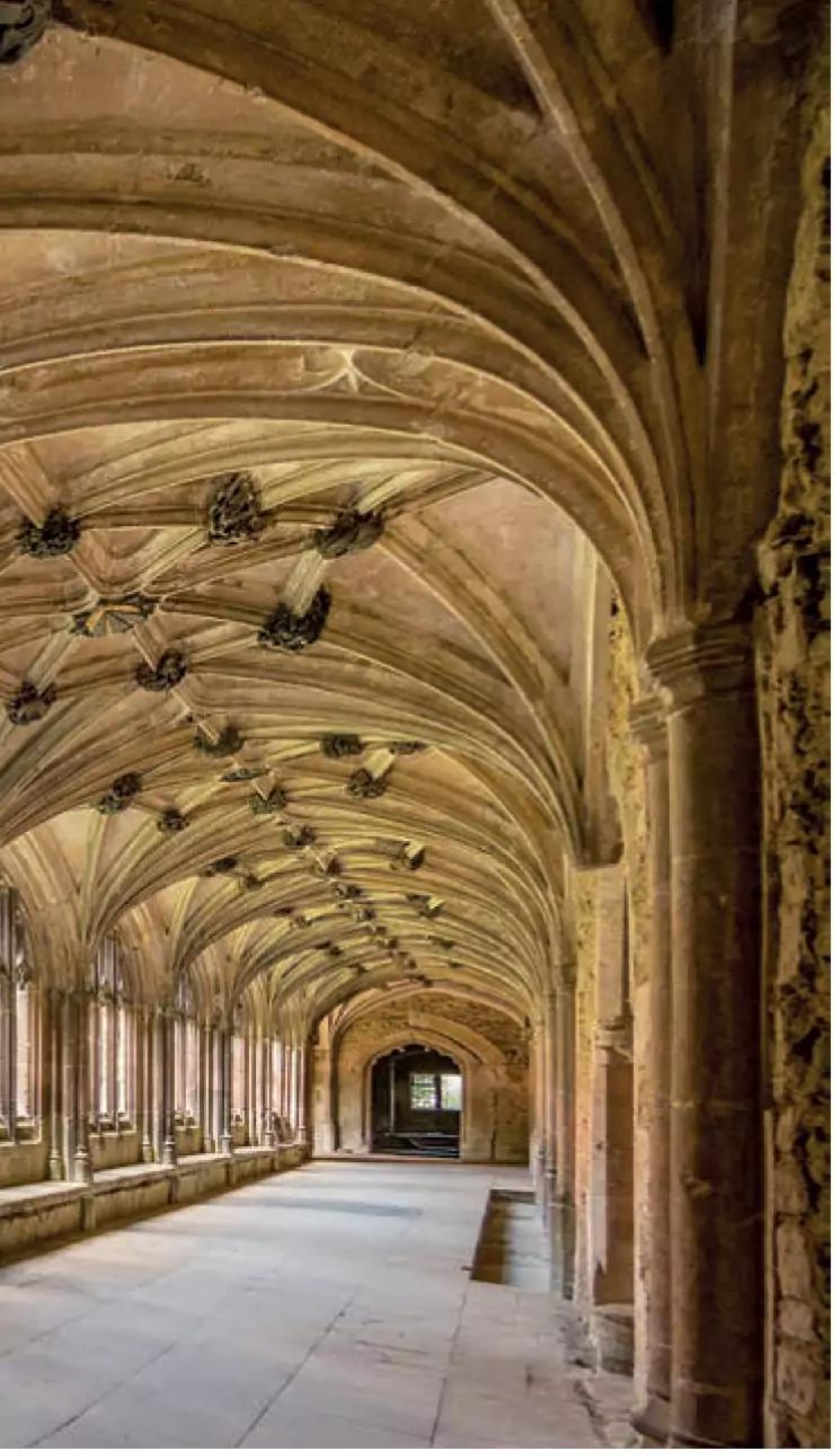
Wideangles aren't thought of as portrait lenses. The exaggerated perspective makes objects closer to the camera look unnaturally large, which can be unkind to faces, enlarging noses and foreheads. As such, it's usually best to step back and zoom in to a longer focal length for a more flattering portrait (a focal length of 85mm is regarded as perfect for people). However, the distortion a wideangle creates can be used for comic effect to exaggerate a person's features or to elongate their limbs. A wide focal length might also be helpful for environmental portraits, where it's important to show the subject in situ.

Wildlife

For obvious reasons, wideangles are not usually thought of for wildlife. But if you want to create an unusual perspective then a wideangle can be a great choice. The field of view will show more of an animal's surroundings than a longer lens, so it can give more of a sense of the animal's environment. The challenge is in getting the camera up close to the subject without spooking it. This is

African penguins on Boulders Beach in Simon's Town, South Africa
Canon EOS 5D Mark III, 15mm, 1/500sec at f/10, ISO 500

© GETTY IMAGES/MIKE KOROSTELEV



© JAMES PATERSON

where remote releases and Wi-Fi shooting via a phone can make a real difference. We can set the camera up on a tripod with a few enticing snacks near the lens, then hide nearby and wait.

Travel

One of the best things about wideangles is the feeling they give the viewer that they could almost step into the scene. So a wideangle – or versatile zoom with a wide end – is a great lens to have in your bag when travelling. A wide will allow you to capture vibrant scenery, shoot in cramped interiors and – if you're lucky enough to own an underwater housing – they're even helpful underwater, as they counteract the magnifying effect of shooting through the water.

Documentary

Documentary photography is about telling the story of the scene unfolding in front of the camera. A wideangle can be a powerful tool, simply because it allows us to compose both close-up foreground details with expansive, detail-filled backdrops. What's more, when used up close to a subject, wideangle lenses offer a visceral in-your-face perspective. It places the viewer in the thick of things, which can create a powerful reaction.

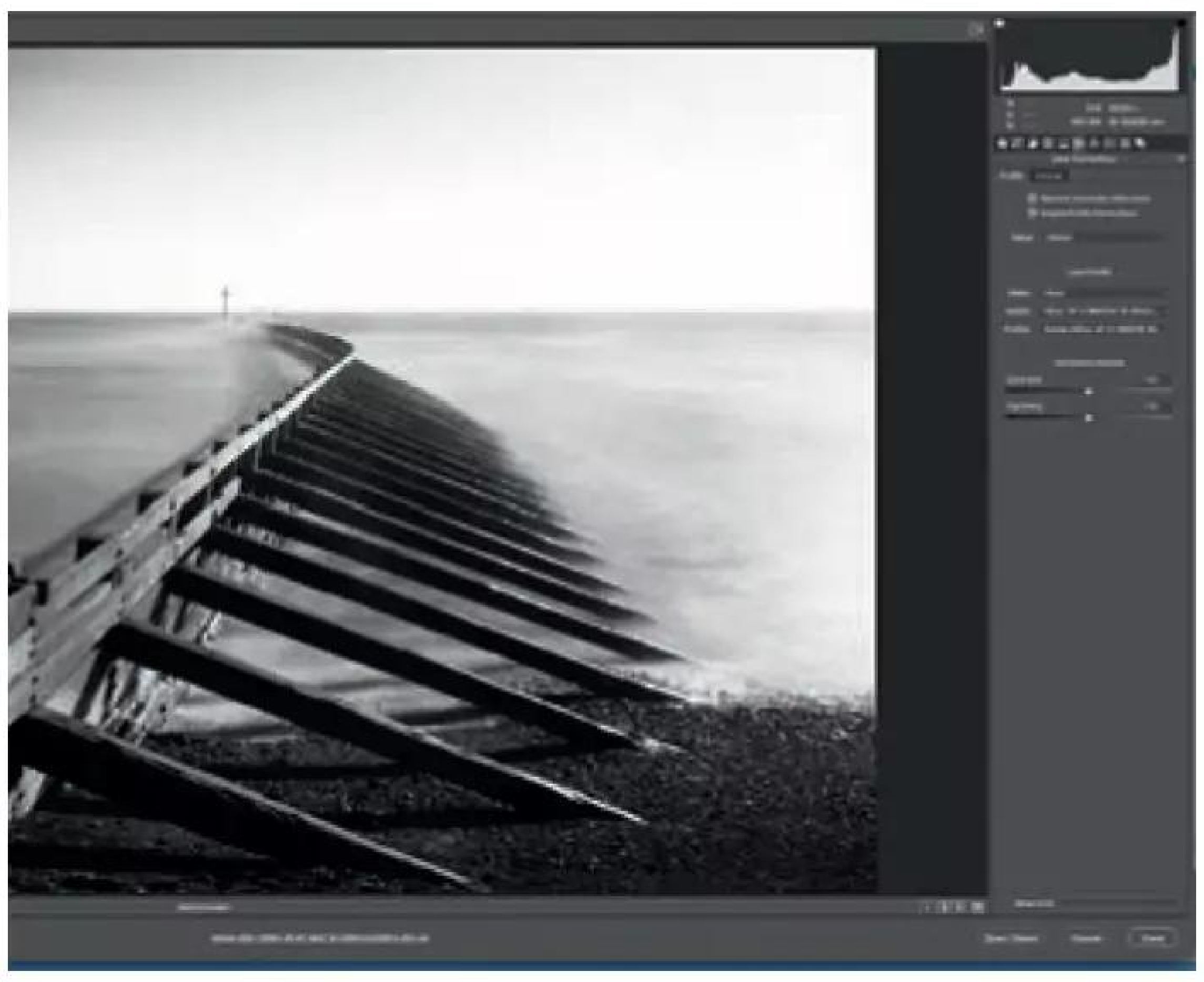
> 'The field of view will show more of the animal's surroundings'

Using filters

A selection of filters can be very useful when shooting with a wideangle. If you're including both land and sky – as is often the case when shooting wide – then a graduated filter can help to balance the two. A polariser can also be useful for enhancing skies and cutting through reflections in foliage, but be careful when shooting blue skies, as the wide field of view might result in uneven dark patches, where the polariser affects one part of the sky more than another. Lens flare can also be an issue when pairing filters with a wideangle as the lens hood must usually be removed – so if shooting in bright sunlight be sure to shade the front element of the lens.

© JAMES PATERSON

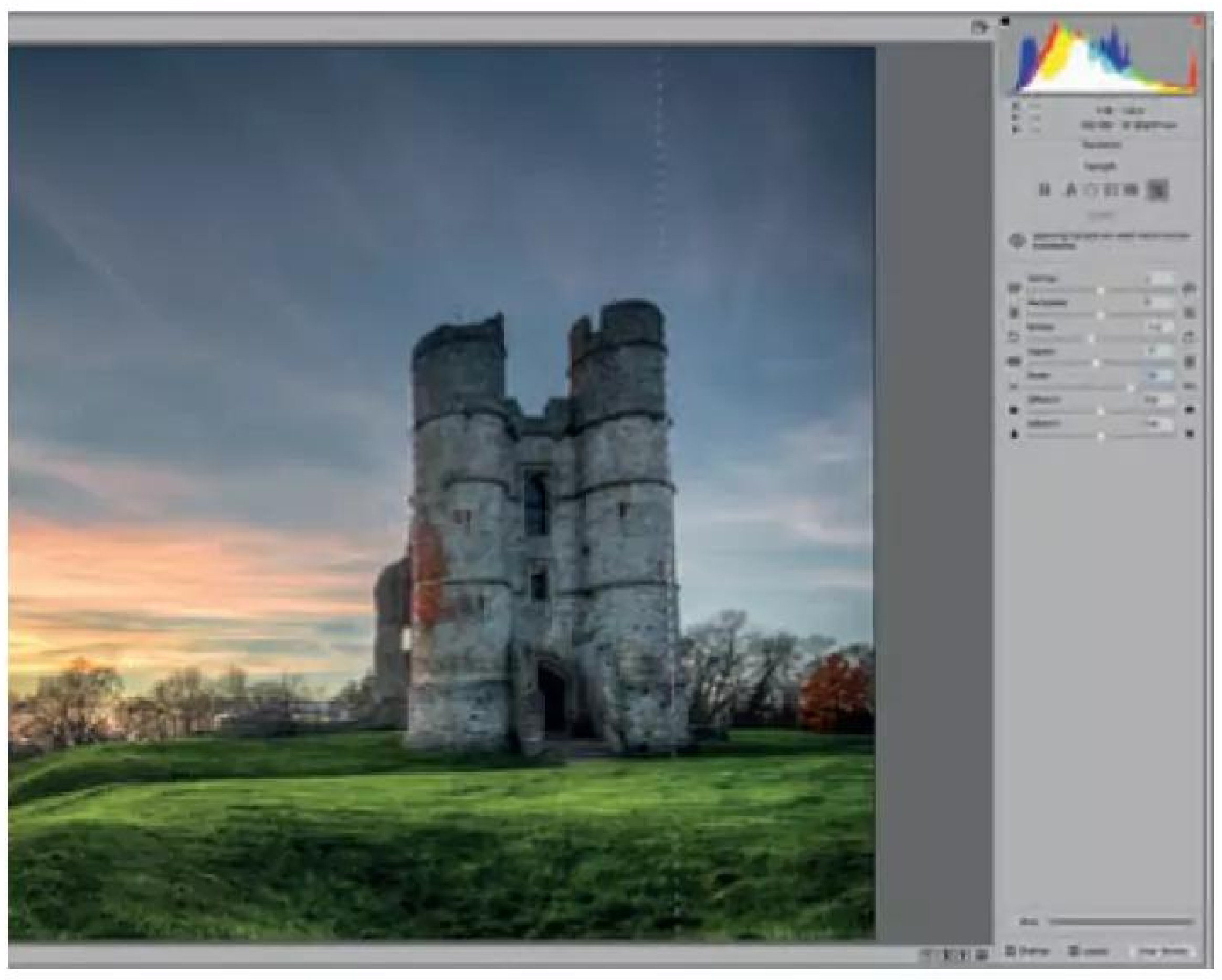
Filters can prove tricky when using wideangles; keep an eye on corners and odd patches



Barrel distortion

There's an inherent difficulty in fitting a wide field of view – one that naturally extends in a hemisphere around the camera – and cramming it onto a flat rectangle. The edges have to be compressed so that everything fits. This is why wideangles are particularly susceptible to barrel distortion, where naturally straight lines within the frame appear to be bowed or bulging. It's more obvious in landscapes and seascapes that feature straight horizons, and architectural shots where the edges of buildings have straight lines.

Quality wideangle lenses will have less distortion, but every lens suffers to some extent. Thankfully, correcting distortion is a simple step if you have software like Photoshop, Lightroom or DxO ViewPoint. The lens used to take the photo is automatically detected (most of the time, if not you can select the lens manually), and a correction for barrel distortion is applied.

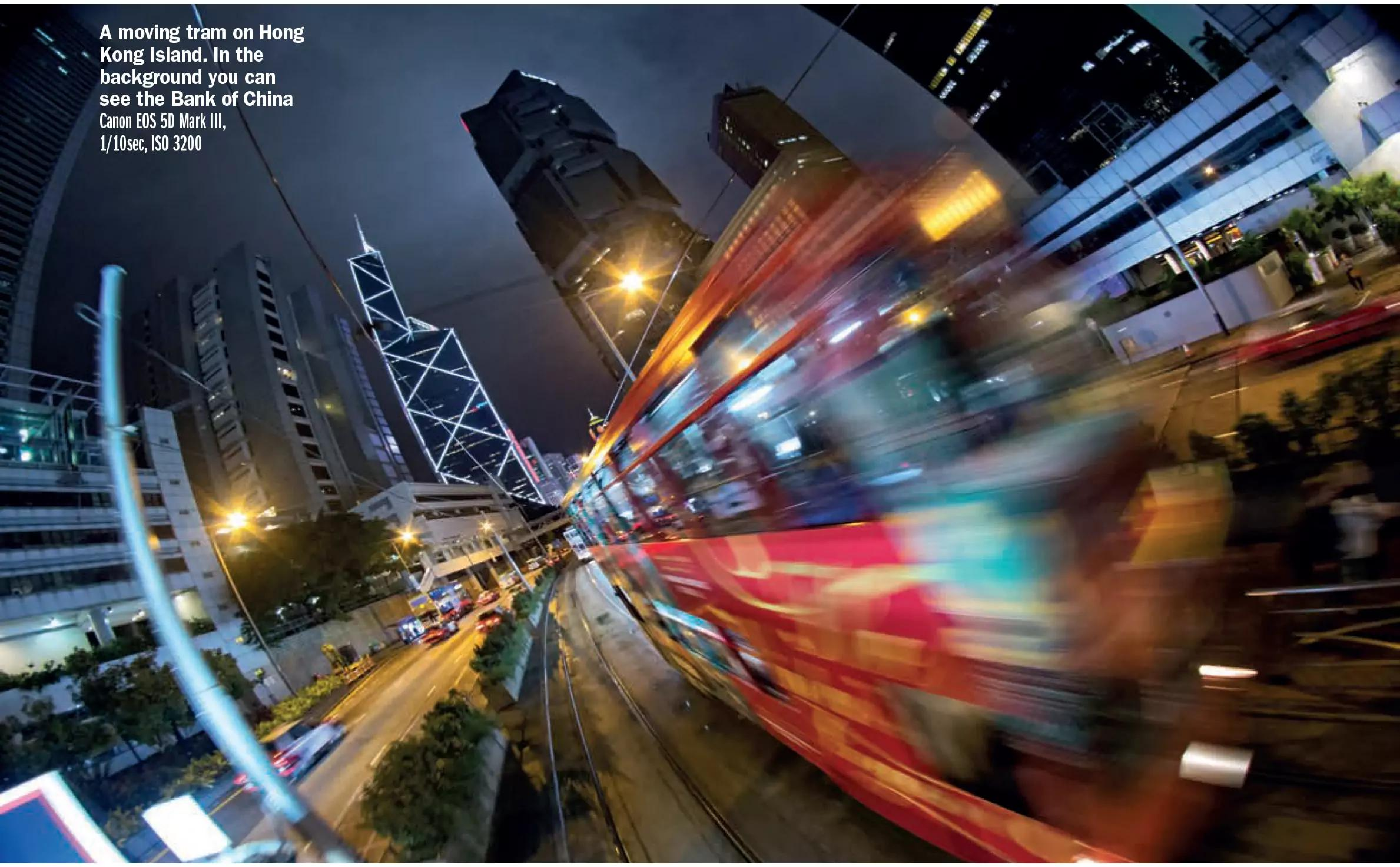


Converging verticals

When we tilt a wideangle lens up to shoot a tall building – the vertical lines tend to collapse in on one another. Known as converging verticals or keystoning, the optical effect is especially apparent with wideangles, simply because the perspective is so exaggerated.

One option is to correct for the converging verticals. At the time of shooting, find a straighter angle to shoot from, by moving further backwards or higher so the upward camera angle is less acute. Corrections can also be made in post-production. The excellent Upright command found in Lightroom's Develop Module (and also in Photoshop's Camera Raw plugin) can detect and correct verticals as well as fix wonky horizons.

The second option is to embrace the visual effect and use it to enhance your composition. In a visual sense, diagonal lines are more aesthetically pleasing than horizontals or verticals. You can take advantage of this by composing dynamic upward angles with your wide lens.

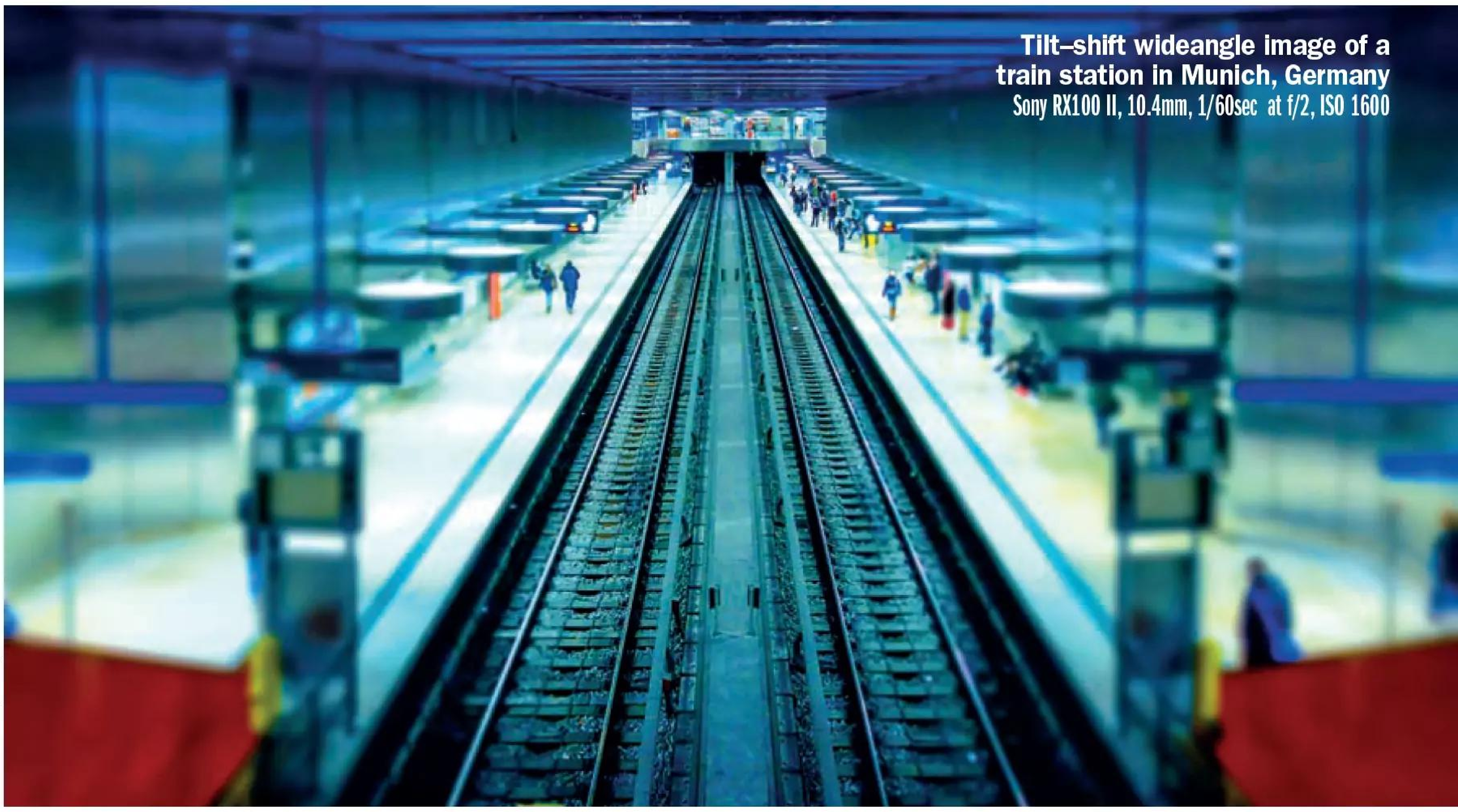


A moving tram on Hong Kong Island. In the background you can see the Bank of China
Canon EOS 5D Mark III, 1/10sec, ISO 3200

© GETTY IMAGES/WWW.STEFANBOCK.DE

Fisheye lenses

Most lenses are designed to correct distortion, so that straight natural lines in a scene will appear straight in the resulting image. Fisheye lenses offer a different approach. Distortion correction is embraced in the attempt to cram as many degrees of view as possible into the frame. The result is a bulging, hemispherical image where anything outside of the centre of the frame appears very distorted. As such, a fisheye isn't for everyday use, but it can give images a dynamic feel that can be used to great effect on certain subjects such as sports and action, or city scenes where the otherworldly distortion can transform angular straight lines into more abstract curved shapes.



Tilt–shift wideangle image of a train station in Munich, Germany
Sony RX100 II, 10.4mm, 1/60sec at f/2, ISO 1600

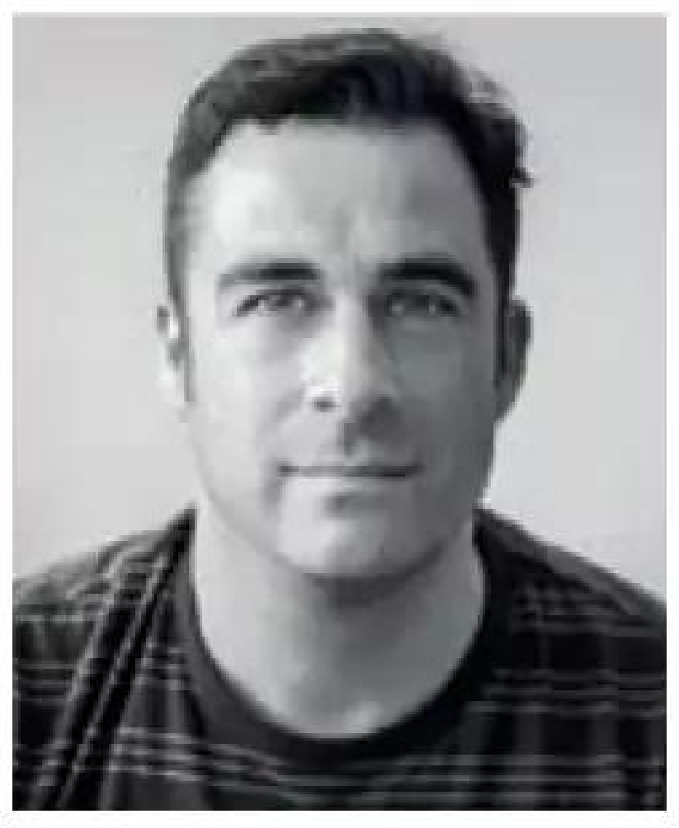
© GETTY IMAGES/EYEEM/REINHARD KRULL

Tilt–shift wides

A tilt-and-shift wideangle lens allows the photographer to counteract the problem of converging verticals by changing the alignment of the front of the lens. This is the 'shift' part, and it's the reason why architectural photographers love tilt-shift wides. It allows them to take expansive photos of interiors without skewing the vertical lines of the walls. The shift control offsets the lens up or down, giving the effect of changing the camera position along the vertical plane. We can also rotate the orientation of the lens body, so that we can tilt on the vertical axis and shift on the horizontal.

A 16mm lens plus a long exposure captures all the drama of Ladybower Reservoir at sunrise
Nikon D810, 16mm, 242sec at f/16, ISO 64

© GETTY IMAGES/ JOHN FINNEY

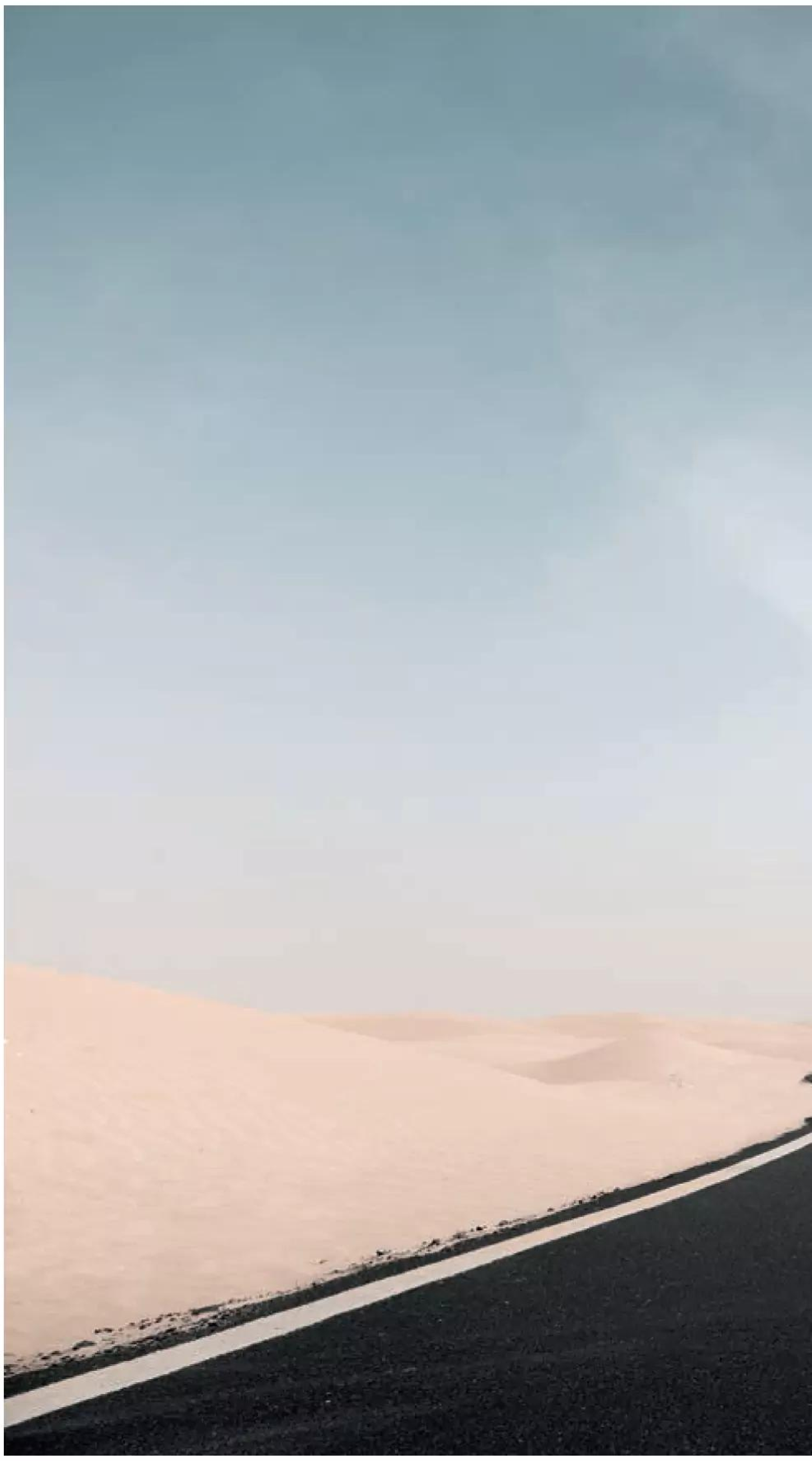


Anthony Lamb

Anthony Lamb has over 50 international photography awards. His work has appeared internationally in exhibitions, galleries, magazines, and interior decor stores, and his fine art limited edition prints are collected globally. His book, *SAND*, is available through KOZU Books. Visit **www.anthonylambphotography.com**

Minimal benefits

Award-winning landscape and fine-art photographer Anthony Lamb talks to **Peter Dench** about his creative and engaging minimalist approach



Above: Desert Road
Canon EOS 5DS, 24-105mm, 1/160sec at f/11, ISO 100

Modern life can be frighteningly fast-paced and overwhelming. In a world of chaos and clutter, where everything is available at the click of a mouse, to understand what is essential and keeping it to a minimum can seem impossible. Throughout his career, landscape photographer Anthony Lamb has determinedly incorporated a stripped-back approach to his craft. ‘The world is only chaotic because of the way we choose to see it,’ he explains. ‘We see the world in such a large panoramic that sometimes it’s difficult for people to see the world in a more simplistic way. Simplifying what’s out there can be easier than you think; minimalism can be uncovered all around us.’

Lamb partly attributes his interest in the landscape to his childhood. While many families would head off on sun-guaranteed package holidays to Spain or the south of France, his travel-loving parents had a more bespoke approach to family trips – taking a hike in Scotland, exploring the Lake District and Jurassic Coast, an eye-opening trip to Tunisia, Africa, and contrasting trip to Chamonix, France, in the shadow of Mont Blanc which Lamb eventually climbed as an adult. ‘These places were heavily inspiring because of their beauty and the changeable weather,’ he says. ‘A lot of the time when we were hiking, it was raining, and that transpires into my work to this day. I tend to shoot in difficult and challenging conditions – storms, sleet, snow, even dust storms. I find that much more appealing than heading out on a pleasant, calm blue sky day. For me, that isn’t experiencing all that nature can offer. My wish is to provide people with the emotional connection of what I see through different times of flux.’

Minimalist education

Lamb partly attributes his interest in minimalism to his schooling. ‘It comes from a deep root in my educational background,’ he reveals, ‘when I studied art and design at college in Stockport, Manchester, then furniture and product design at university in Nottingham. I gravitated towards linear designs, and I was always interested in a simplistic design approach, similar to that of the Bauhaus movement, classic examples of less is more. Much of my early work was black & white, using a high-key and low-key aesthetic to produce simplistic monotone images that capture a brief moment in time.’

Born in 1976, it wasn’t until he turned 27 that Lamb, self-taught, started to take his photography seriously; abandoning a career in sales, and turning professional around 2018. Based in the United Arab Emirates, where he’s lived since 2011 with his wife and two young daughters, the desert was an inevitable lure for the minimal man. ‘When you first visit the UAE and exit the plane, you’re bombarded by awe-inspiring, but overwhelming skyscrapers. It’s chaotic, but when you head out of the big city lights you can capture a new perspective of the skyline – the overwhelming buildings

Right: Illumination, East Sussex
Canon EOS 5DS, 24-70mm, 15 secs at f/11, ISO 50

KIT LIST

Fujifilm GFX100S

It's the best camera I've ever owned. It's relatively lightweight for a medium-format camera, weather-sealed and captures mind-blowing detailed images, perfect for large-format prints.

Shutter-release cable

Much of my work is long exposure, so it's paramount I have a shutter-release cable, as it will allow me to switch to bulb mode and reduce any risk of camera shake when conducting exposures of up to four or five minutes.

LEE Filters

I've been using LEE Filters for over 15 years and I've always been impressed with their capability and quality. I carry six graduated filters and three neutral-density filters. My most commonly used are the 10-stop and 15-stop ND filters for seascapes captures.

Three CDs

Bit of a strange one, but with the digital age, I have many redundant CDs lying around the house and always carry three in my camera bag. Why, you may ask? They're the perfect companion when using a tripod on the beach, as you can place one under each tripod leg to help distribute the weight and reduce the chances of camera movement on the wet sand.

L-bracket

This is probably one of my favourite pieces of equipment, as it allows you to change the camera's orientation quickly. But it also stops the camera from unintentionally rotating on the connection plate due to the camera's weight.

now appear very small with a big expanse of sky above. So if you're looking for minimalism, it's still possible to find it.'

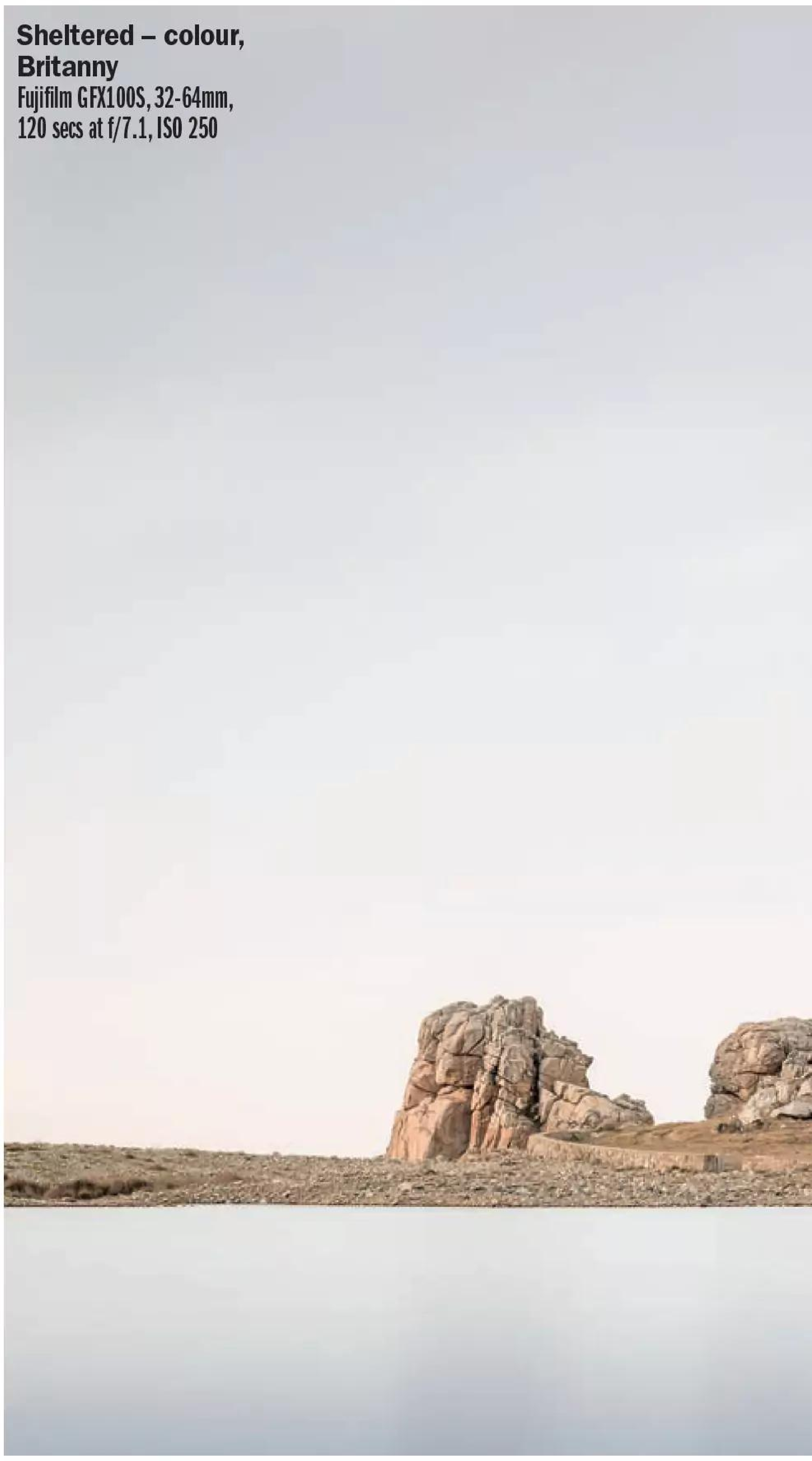
Lamb's pictures of the desert are ethereal and calm, the composition exquisite. Carefully placed objects hint at a more hostile environment, a sandblasted tree or decaying oil drum. 'When I'm in the field, I'm not thinking like a minimalist – looking for a single post or detail. Instead, I do a lot of research, find specific elements in the landscape that are appealing and when I arrive on location, I'll shoot that particular subject. Then I'll look behind me, to the left and right. I'm not just at that location for one shot, I'm always looking for other opportunities. I'm visually sorting through what's in front of me, I'm really looking and arguably seeing more. Minimalism makes you consider every aspect of the photo. Everything present is more susceptible to being judged, so it's paramount to get things as close to perfect as possible in camera.'

Negative thinking

The negative space in Lamb's images is crucial to his aesthetic. 'It's optional when you're shooting to consider utilising negative space, but don't just select a blue sky as your negative space; contemplate the inclusion of cloudy or moody skies. This usage of space mustn't be too simplistic, it needs to hold some weight and texture. Water can also be used as negative space, particularly in long-exposure work. If you take a choppy sea that hasn't been smoothed by using a long exposure, there's a different emotion when you see it visually. It may make you feel more unsettled. Whereas if you visualise a lake in the morning stillness, you offer a more peaceful emotion. Negative space is part of my minimalist photography approach and is why I continue to use it in the field. It's also in line with my preferred aesthetic. Over the years, I've learnt how to use negative space to my advantage. I call it positive space because what it's doing is pulling an object, like a tree, into the environment.'

Heading to the coast

Living close to a searingly hot and inhospitable desert, it's not surprising to hear that Lamb's latest adventure took him to the cold and wet coastline of Brittany. Several years ago, after seeing a few images of rugged huts and stone houses hunched on the edge of the Atlantic Ocean, he scoured the land and sea periphery via satellite to find interesting locations. From around 80, he decided on half. Over ten days, he sought them out, shooting three frames of each subject to make sure the light, long-exposure and sharpness were captured correctly. He reckons ten to fifteen shots have made the cut, five or six might be acceptable and one may stand out. 'I'll be lucky if I can shoot

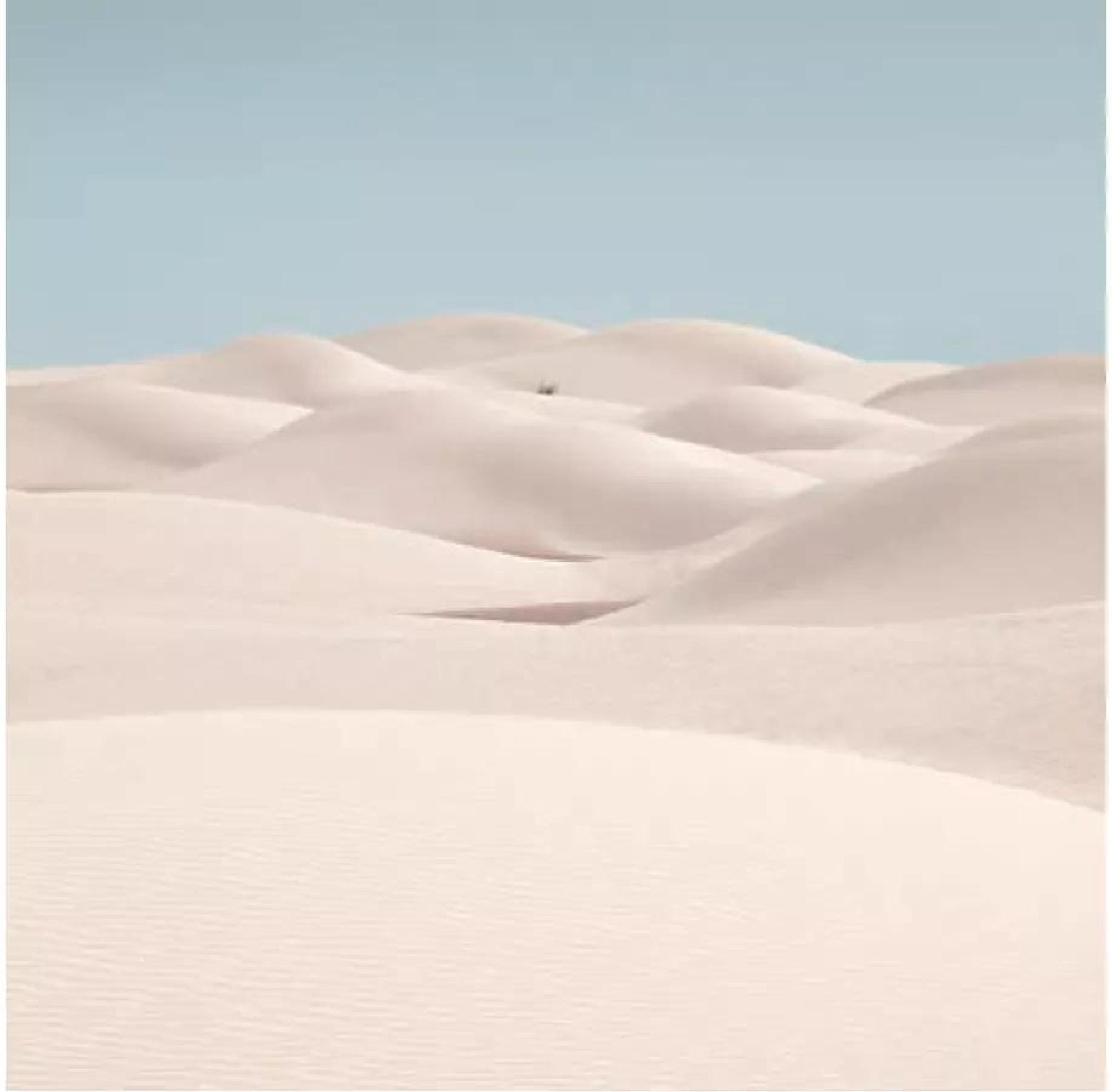

Sheltered – colour, Brittany
Fujifilm GFX100S, 32-64mm, 120 secs at f/7.1, ISO 250

ANTHONY'S TOP SIX LANDSCAPE TIPS

1 Don't always head out at sunset/sunrise or in calm conditions. Some of my best images are captured in challenging weather. Storms, gale-force winds, and blizzards can all add another dimension to your work. Aim to visit at different times of the year, as the sun offers infinite lighting conditions.

2 Keep returning to the same locations and take your time in exploring the area. Get to know the landscape intimately and how conditions can influence the subjects you're drawn towards.

3 Look for subjects that open the door to a portfolio rather than a single capture. This might be the study of lighthouses or rivers, or simply a collection of seascapes. A collection of photographs relies on selective composition, complementary post-processing, and subjects that create a flow.



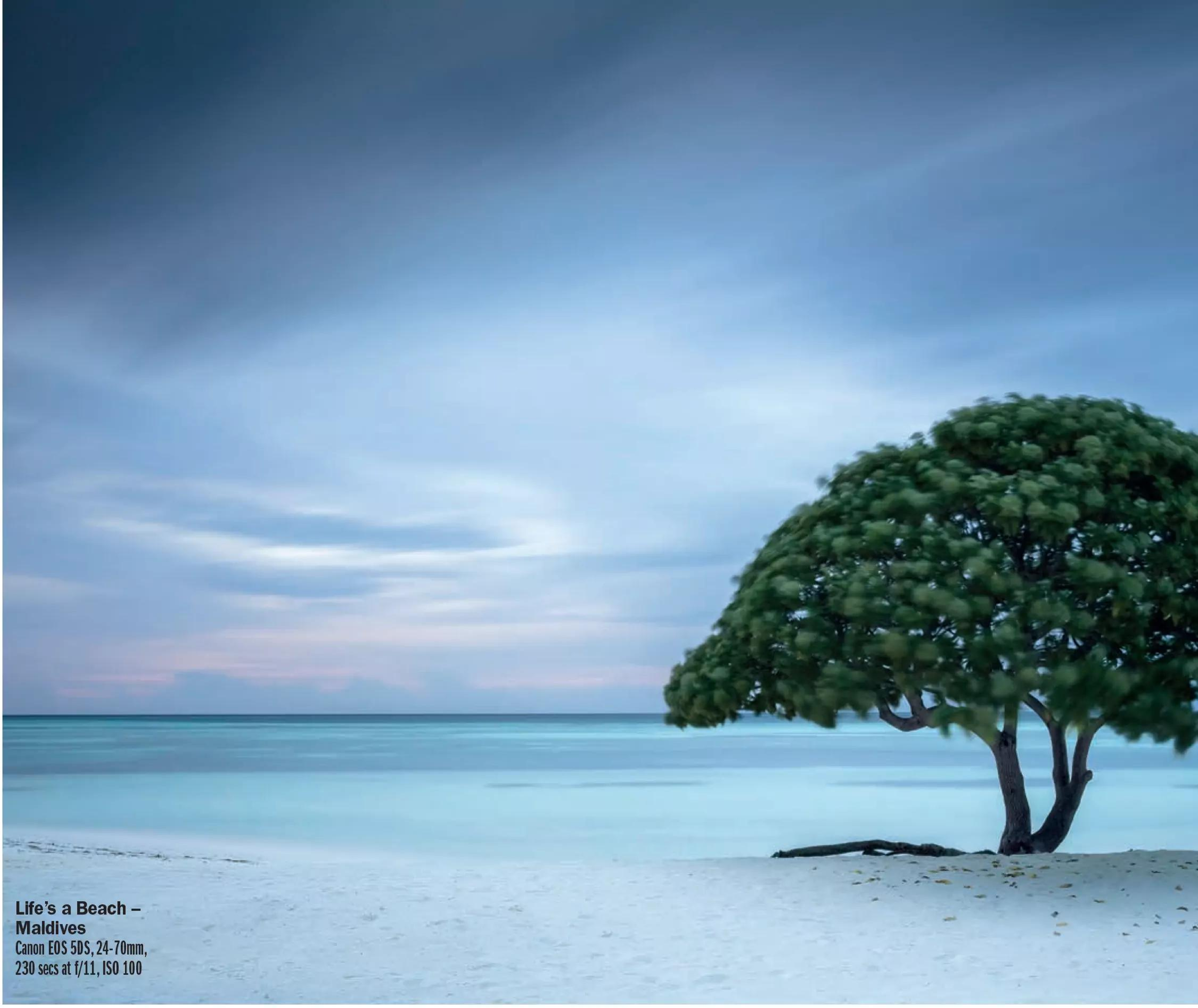
Why it Works

The one image that resonates is a photograph I captured in the Arabian Desert called 'Captivation'. I was revisiting a small, secluded desert in an area called Seih Al-Dahal – an intimate collection of dunes that's positioned on the perimeter of a cycle track. There was a storm developing on the horizon, which offered the perfect contrasting backdrop for the softly lit sand. On rare occasions, I will spot a photographic opportunity immediately, visualising exactly how to compose and frame the subject. Walking over a dune crest, the scene revealed itself, a perfectly sculpted dune field, a balanced collaboration of congruous landforms. In the centre of the composition, as if placed there by a tentative paintbrush, a tiny desert shrub exemplifying the sense of scale and subject interest. In a split second, I knew precisely how to capture this minimalist spectacle. Using a long lens to compress the image, I used the dune layers to lead the eye through the scene. I centralised the shrub and the dash of orange between the dunes, which is the different coloured sand blown in from the desert plains. The blanket of cloud above thinned for an instant, creating the luminosity required to increase tonality, and I clicked the shutter.

4 Seek out simple compositions using the long lens. For example, look for details in the landscape by breaking down the big vista. But continue using the same compositional techniques when framing your subject to ensure the eye is led through the image. The above example was shot at 200mm.

5 Researching your locations prior to visiting them is crucial, as it will help you get the best out of the environment. I have a number of apps on my phone that allow me to check the weather, tide times and sunset/sunrise times, and I regularly refer to Google Maps, where I've saved hundreds of locations.

6 Select locations based on what you enjoy looking at and your interests, not what's popular on social media. You must enjoy creating photographs that reflect your vision and imagination – that way, you will be on the journey to finding your own voice as a photographer.



Life's a Beach – Maldives
Canon EOS 5DS, 24-70mm, 230 secs at f/11, ISO 100

three or four great images a year. That's insane! Not many people would do the job if they realised that.'

Lamb doesn't take on the entire burden of curating his work solely himself, sourcing the opinion of gallerists, art consultants, and his wife. These second opinions offer him a clearer understanding of which images will enter the market. He'll then do test prints to check for imperfections.

Out from within

How can you make your first minimal steps? 'When I'm teaching somebody photography,' he explains, 'I ask them to look at what drives them – whether it's landscapes, seascapes, mountainscapes or deserts – to find something that motivates their passion for photography. Once they have an idea of what's driving their subject choice, it's important to think about what influences them as a person – I ask them to look at their art collection at home, consider what type of art spoke to them as a child and what speaks to them now. American painter Mark Rothko influences me now, for example. It's about accessing your hidden passions rather than being overly influenced by social media. Don't get bogged down by what other people are shooting. Try to find your own originality. Capture images that drive you as a person, and you will find your own voice.'

Post-production is the final step in the purification of Lamb's images. 'It's a personal aesthetic choice. When I was younger, I used to bump the clarity up to 25-30, I thought it looked great at the time. But all it's doing is amplifying the noise across the image. Now, I look for balance throughout the photograph, not pushing the sliders too far to find that equilibrium within the post processing. To keep it relatively close to what I saw and give it an aesthetic close to what I think is suitable for the image. Selfishly, the editing I do is what appeals to me, I aim for soft, calming, desaturated colour, which holds an ethereal feel.'

Lamb's clean and serene images are often achieved in the sort of hostile environments that present physical and mental challenges. His search for aesthetic perfection has been refined over time and may have taken its toll. 'I'm trying to expand from the minimalist genre. I think I got into it unintentionally; I don't necessarily want to be classed as a minimalist photographer, but I'm more than happy to be called a landscape photographer. Looking back, I never intended to follow this pathway; it was something that transpired from my influences, inspiration from other photographers, my journey as a designer and the way I compose a frame.' His quest to be minimal has taken maximum effort. AP

Brittany Lighthouse
Fujifilm GF100S, 32-64mm, 80 secs at f/11, ISO 50

Top 6 locations for minimalist landscapes

1 The Empty Quarter, United Arab Emirates

The desert is a location that's been close to my heart since relocating to the region in 2011. It's a place of solitude and intimacy. It can also be extremely challenging. The weather can take a turn for the worse; winds can reach 40-50kph, temperatures as high as 40°C and the humidity can hit 90%. I thrive in these conditions; dust particles in the atmosphere, thin clouds and flat light offer an ethereal aesthetic.

2 Brittany, France

From its wild, rugged coastline to the beauty of the lighthouses, Brittany has many opportunities for the landscape photographer. If it's long-exposure photography you're looking for, you won't be disappointed, or capture some of the rolling waves that continually pound the granite coastline. Make sure you don't get caught in one of the downpours that peel off the Atlantic Ocean!

3 North Norfolk coast, UK

A hidden gem for landscape photography in the eastern England, the north coast of Norfolk. I was attracted to the region in 2018 due to its low-lying, expansive fens, which resonate with my style, and negative space is in abundance. Making my first visit, the coast grabbed my attention with its dune-fringed beaches, beach huts, piers, and small rocky outcrops.

4 New York, USA

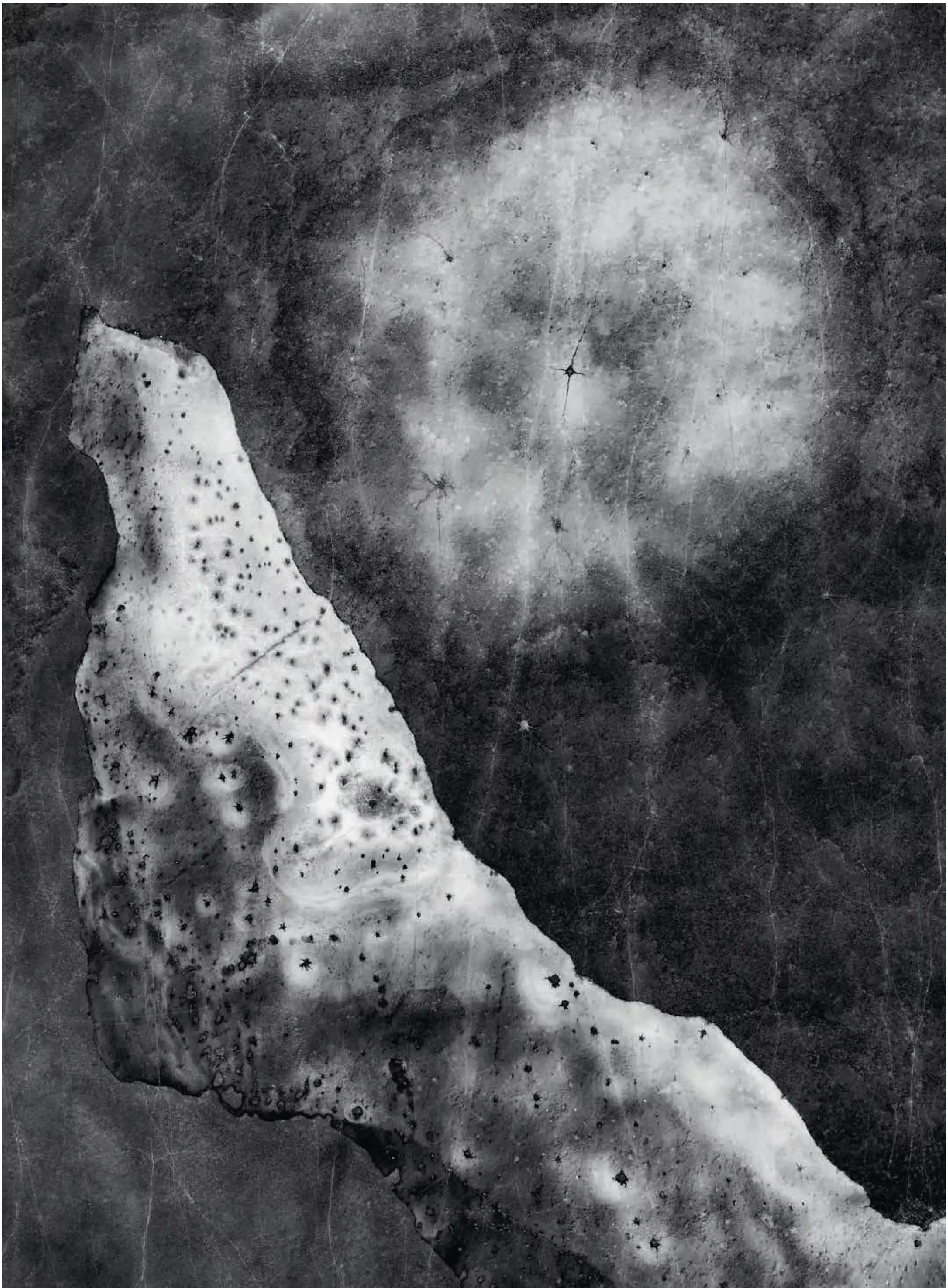
Endless compositions, beautiful architecture and great food! Why wouldn't you want to take the plunge and visit New York City for photography? My top tip – charter a small helicopter from White Plains airport at sunset. It offers unimaginable views of the city, you have free rein where to fly and the pilot will even take the doors off for you so you can get a better view.

5 Cape Town, South Africa

Cape Town is a city of so much diversity. Stunning beaches, beautiful harbours, Lion's Head and Table Mountain, the famous wine regions and a selection of game reserves on your doorstep. I'm itching to go back and continue exploring the many empty beaches and coves that circulate the entire peninsular. I'd recommend visiting Boulders Beach and Long Beach, located close to Chapman's Peak.

6 Maldives, Indian Ocean

These atolls are under threat from climate change and based on the stories I heard while I was there, the threat is very real. The islands are flooding, and the ever-increasing tides are destroying reefs. Documenting the beauty of these islands was one of the most memorable experiences of my photographic career. I hope we have time to save these pockets of paradise.



A higher love

For award-winning photographer Kacper Kowalski, it's important to actually be up in the clouds himself. He reveals more about his unusual techniques to **Amy Davies**

In an age where aerial photography has become more accessible than ever thanks to the commercialisation of drones, there are some who still prefer to put in the hard work of being up in the sky themselves.

For someone like Kacper Kowalski it's about so much more than the final image, and, as such, there is a real need to shoot his images directly from above, rather than safely on terra firma. It's an approach that seems to work – in the 25 years he's been doing this, he's won countless awards, been exhibited numerous times and is putting together a book charting all of his success.

He's fresh from taking home top prize in the Professional Landscape Photography category at the prestigious Sony World Photography Awards, where the project shown here on these pages – Event Horizon – clearly impressed the judges.

Hooked

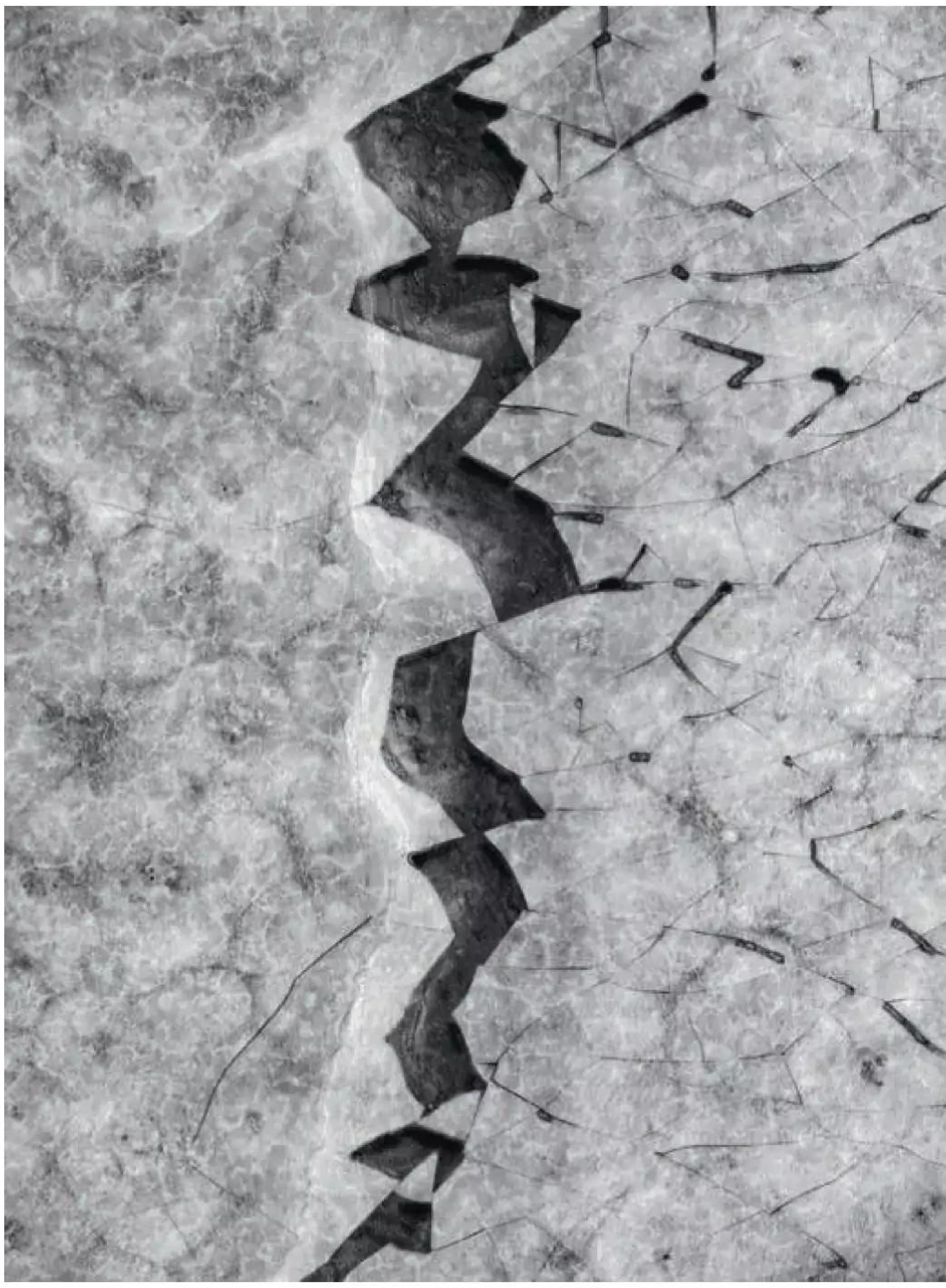
I too was struck by the unusual nature of these images. Working on a weekly photography magazine, it's easy to become tired of the usual landscapes – as stunning as they generally are – but these, shot from an aerial perspective and in monochrome, are striking in a completely different way, and for all the right reasons. Upon discovery that they were shot in person from above, I was even more hooked and keen to find out more. Happily, Kacper was only too forthcoming with some answers.

The process sounds intense. He explains, 'Before I take off, I go through a ritual. I unfold the wing, warm up the engine, check the apparatus and fuel level, springs, cables and a hundred things on the checklist. I put on my flight suit, helmet, gloves. I watch the clouds and birds as they fly past. I look at the smoke from chimneys to see the wind, but I also track how gusts of wind move branches with leaves and grasses in the meadows. I enjoy the sun on my face. I concentrate more and more. I choose the moment to take off. I pull my wings over my head, add gas and run as hard as I can, careful not to stumble and keep my course into the wind. At a certain point, I break away from the ground and I am flooded with joy.'

Turbulent air

'Flying, I feel space with my whole body. All my senses are involved with perceiving it. I feel the touch of the wind on my face, smell the frost, see the shape of clouds casting shadows, and so on. This sounds rather static, but it isn't. Clouds don't just travel with the wind. Sucking in turbulent air from below, they swell or blur under the action of falling cold air masses. The light, the arrangement of observed forms and shapes changes.

'The engine vibrates, the rotation of the propeller causes vibrations. Noise surrounds me. I do not cut myself off from these inconveniences, but allow them to pass through me. When the sound changes even for a moment, I notice it. It contains information that is important to me. The whole system is jittery, and in a sense, these are my vibrations as well. I am fused to the machine, and the paraglider wing and the ropes connecting me to it make me touch, almost lean against the air, just as a gliding bird touches the air with the feather of its aileron. Of course, this is an illusion, it just seems that way to me, I have learned to read these messages.'



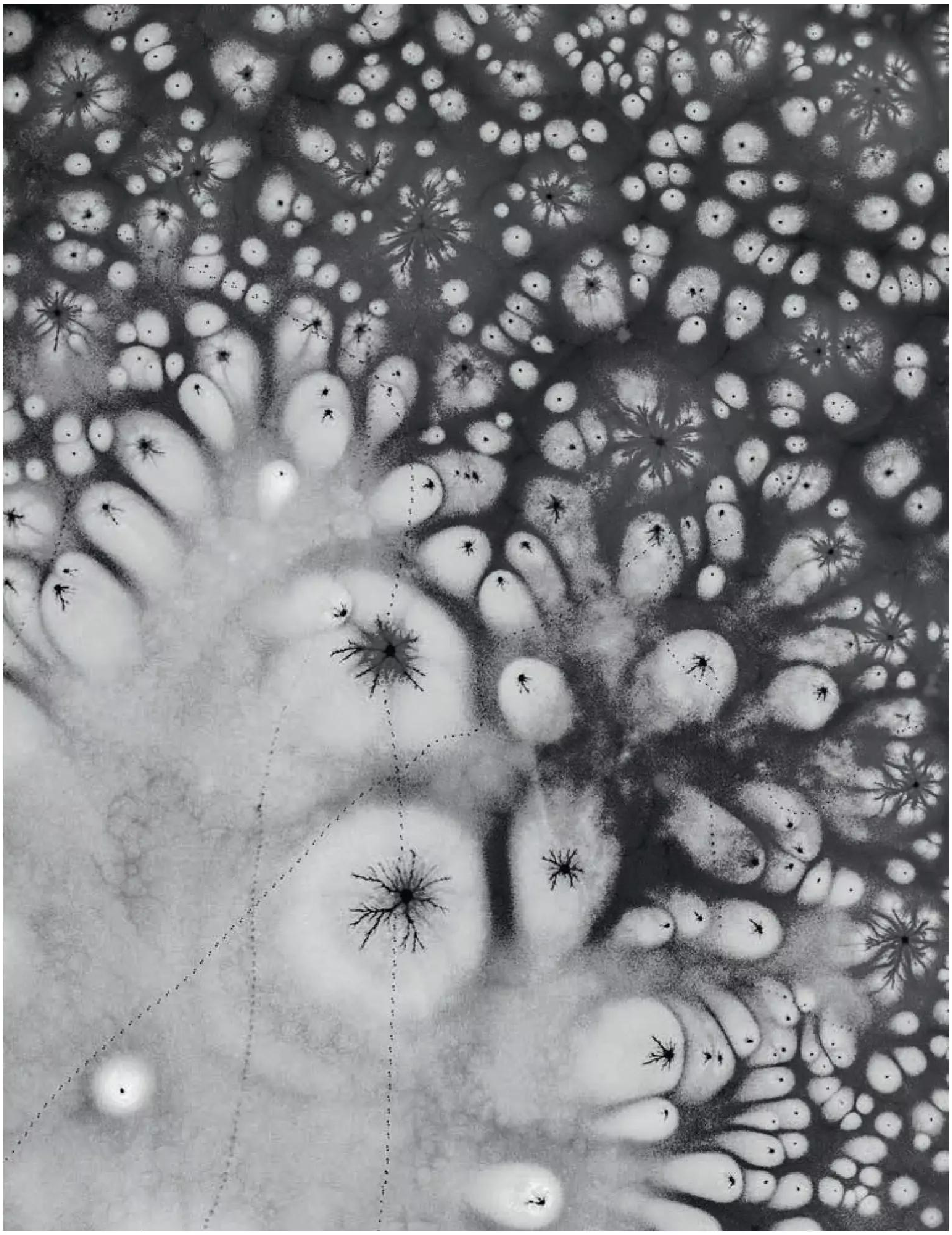
Above: Event Horizon, # 209. Poland, Feb 2021
Motorised Paraglider, Dudek Report'air
Fujifilm GFX 100, GF 110mm, 1/2000sec at f/5, ISO 500

Left: Event Horizon, #305. Poland, Mar 2021
Gyrocopter Ela Cuguar 07
Fujifilm GFX 100, GF110mm, 1/4000sec at f/3.6, ISO 1000

Although each trip requires research into certain factors, such as the weather forecast, any airspace restrictions, how much fuel is likely to be required and so on, it's interesting to note that one thing Kacper doesn't look into ahead of time is the landscape itself. 'It's like discovering a new city. You can score with a guide by recreating somebody else's route, or you can go by feeling, people, energy. That way the sensation of discovery is powerful – but, it can happen that I miss something of a "must-have". Aware of that risk, I prefer to go on my own and do the research afterwards.'

It's clear that for Kacper, his experiences are holistic, and about much more than just the photographs he produces.

'Flight is not just a physical experience, but a real experience of the here and now. During it, something happens to consciousness. It is impossible from a distance of time, under safe conditions on the ground, to reconstruct the course of what happens up there. Perhaps this is what abstraction is all about. In the reality of the world around me, I perceive emanations of thoughts, feelings, concepts, impressions. Impressions which I cannot note down in writing.' He continues, '100 years ago, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry said, "I fly because it releases my mind from the tyranny of petty things". My paraphrase is, "I fly because it releases me from the tyranny of the mind."'



Hungry for more

Going up in the air is not for the faint-hearted. Especially not in the freezing cold locales that Kacper favours. But it's this level of discomfort which he believes spurs him on to create good work. 'I have this feeling that civilisation deprives us of challenges and physical hardships, and this distances us from our predisposed genetic traits. The body knows what to do when it's cold, when I'm hungry – to increase concentration and trance I fly fasting, feeling hungry to use my own body as a catalyst to the experience. I feel the wind on my face, the snow falls between my goggles and helmet. It's cold. Then, through intensified body sensations, I am closer to instinct and archetypes, closer to the roots, nature, that state where concentration fits into our natural genetic predisposition.'

As for photographic technique, Kacper describes that part of the process as quite simple, especially with modern cameras which produce very good results at high ISOs. 'The challenge is with shake if one wants to film, or use longer exposures. Then you need additional stabilisation. For this I use the Ken-Lab KS-08 analog gyro-stabiliser. Inside this, a heavy mass spins at a dizzying 30,000 revolutions per minute. This makes the equipment heavy. And I like that it's heavy. With that comes a struggle with the physicality of the world, a challenge.'

Given everything that Kacper says about his feelings of being up in the air, it's perhaps no surprise to learn that he doesn't favour drone work – but he did give it a go when they first became popular. 'I wanted to see if I would be able to achieve an effect without risking my life and health, and the constant struggle with the air, wind, tall grass or snow and so on. It turned out that this was not my way. Looking at the phone screen, my emotions were about whether the drone would fall on someone's head and whether there would be enough battery to return. Most important though, I wasn't being creative – just reproductive. I found that

Above: Event Horizon, #30. Poland, Jan 2021
Gyrocopter Ela Cuguar 07, Fujifilm GFX 100, GF110mm, 1/640sec at f/4, ISO 800

Left: Event Horizon, #24. Poland, Jan 2021
Gyrocopter Ela Cuguar 07, Fujifilm GFX100, GF110mm, 1/640sec at f/4, ISO 800

IMPROVE YOUR PHOTOGRAPHY
GUIDES

IMPROVE YOUR PHOTOGRAPHY
LANDSCAPES
FROM THE MAKERS OF Amateur Photographer
The essential equipment you need
Advice and tips from the masters
Photography to inspire you
Nikon

LANDSCAPES

IMPROVE YOUR PHOTOGRAPHY
WILDLIFE
FROM THE MAKERS OF Amateur Photographer
The essential equipment you need
Advice and tips from the masters
Photography to inspire you

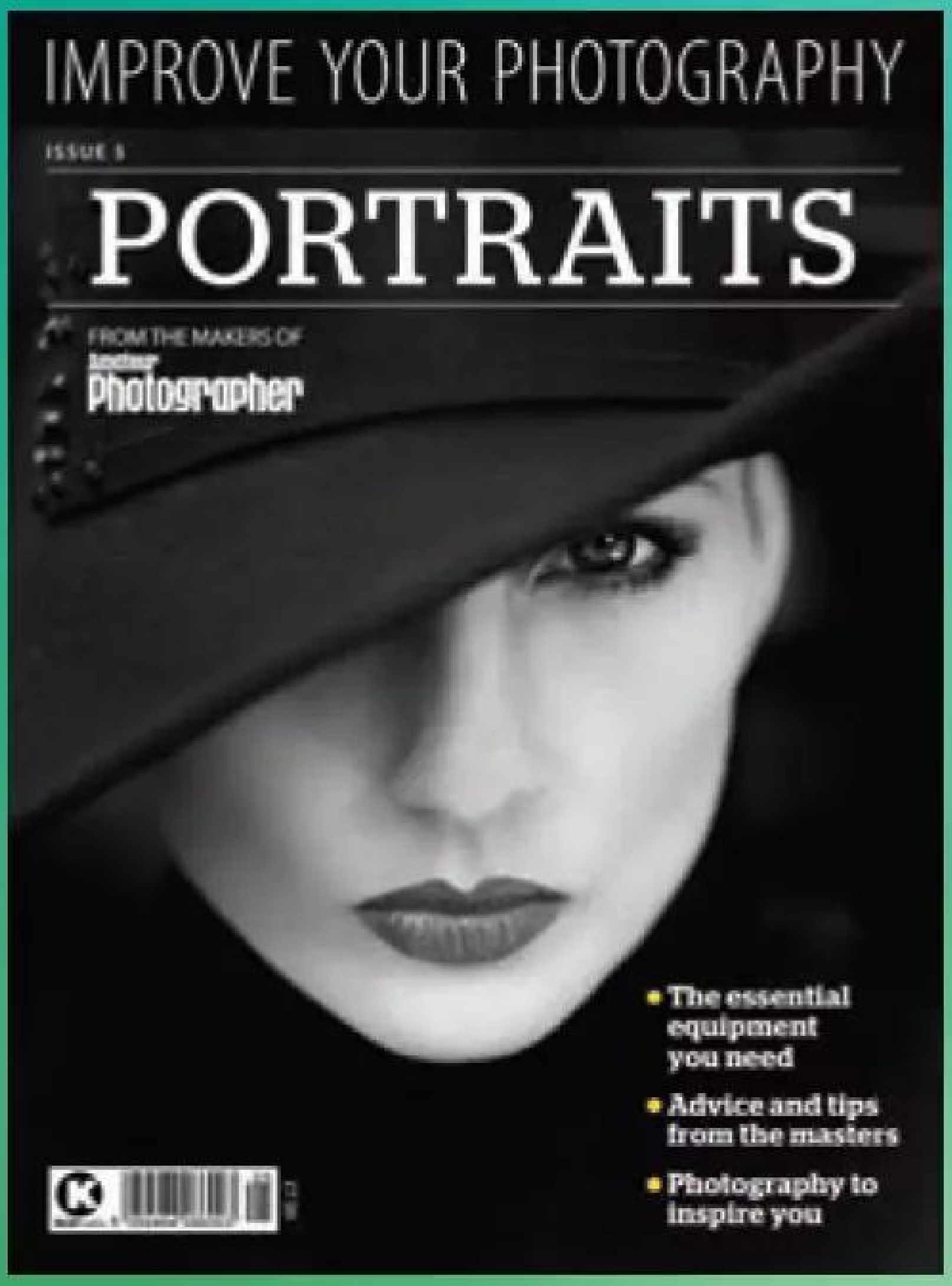
WILDLIFE

IMPROVE YOUR PHOTOGRAPHY
ADVANCED CAMERA SKILLS
FROM THE MAKERS OF Amateur Photographer
The essential equipment you need
Advice and tips from the masters
Photography to inspire you

ADVANCED CAMERA SKILLS

IMPROVE YOUR PHOTOGRAPHY
NATURE
FROM THE MAKERS OF Amateur Photographer
The essential equipment you need
Advice and tips from the masters
Photography to inspire you

NATURE


IMPROVE YOUR PHOTOGRAPHY
PORTRAITS
FROM THE MAKERS OF Amateur Photographer
The essential equipment you need
Advice and tips from the masters
Photography to inspire you

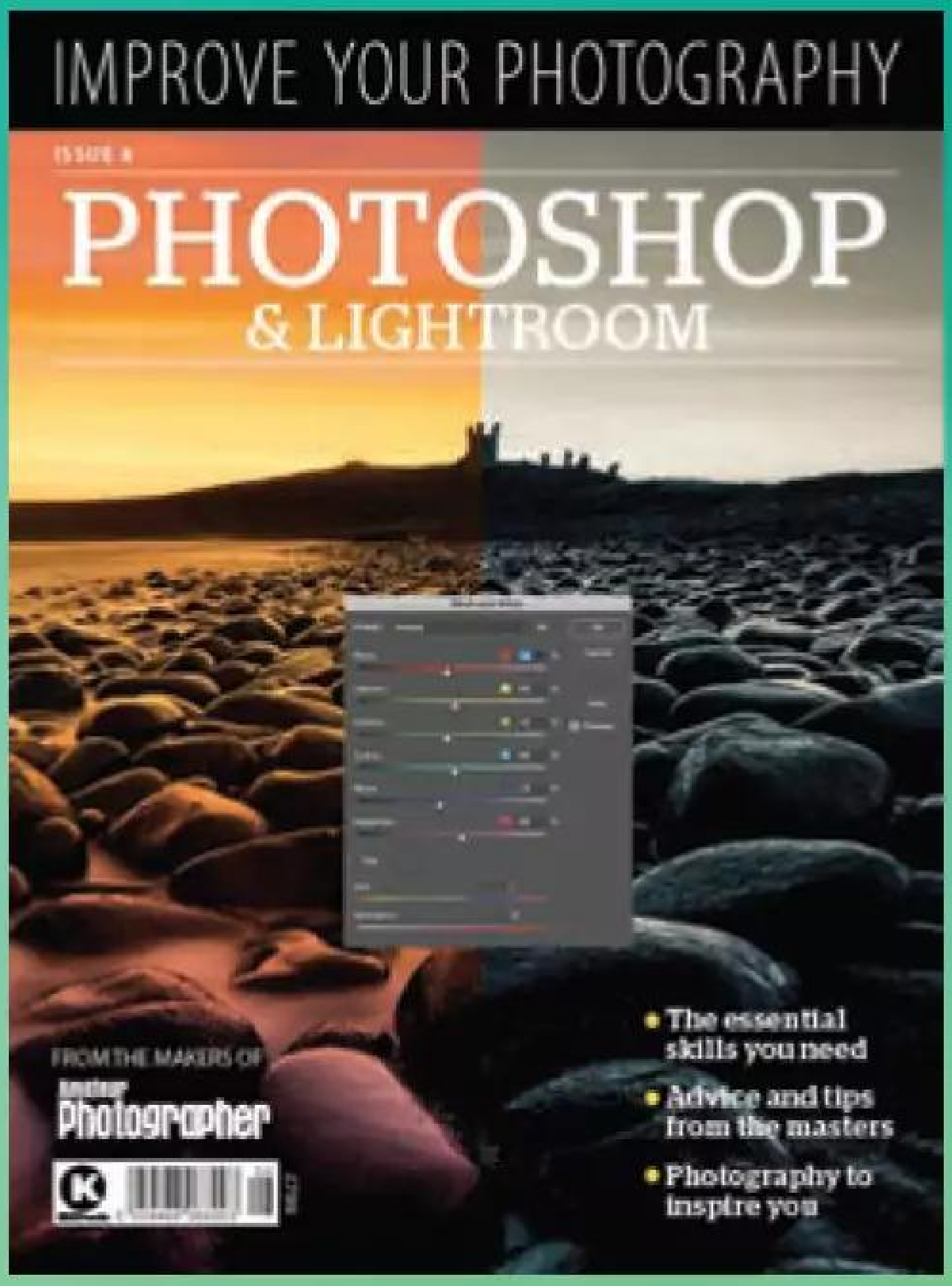
PORTRAITS

IMPROVE YOUR PHOTOGRAPHY
FILM PHOTOGRAPHY
FROM THE MAKERS OF Amateur Photographer
The essential equipment you need
Advice and tips from the masters
Photography to inspire you

FILM PHOTOGRAPHY

IMPROVE YOUR PHOTOGRAPHY
TRAVEL
FROM THE MAKERS OF Amateur Photographer
The essential equipment you need
Advice and tips from the masters
Photography to inspire you

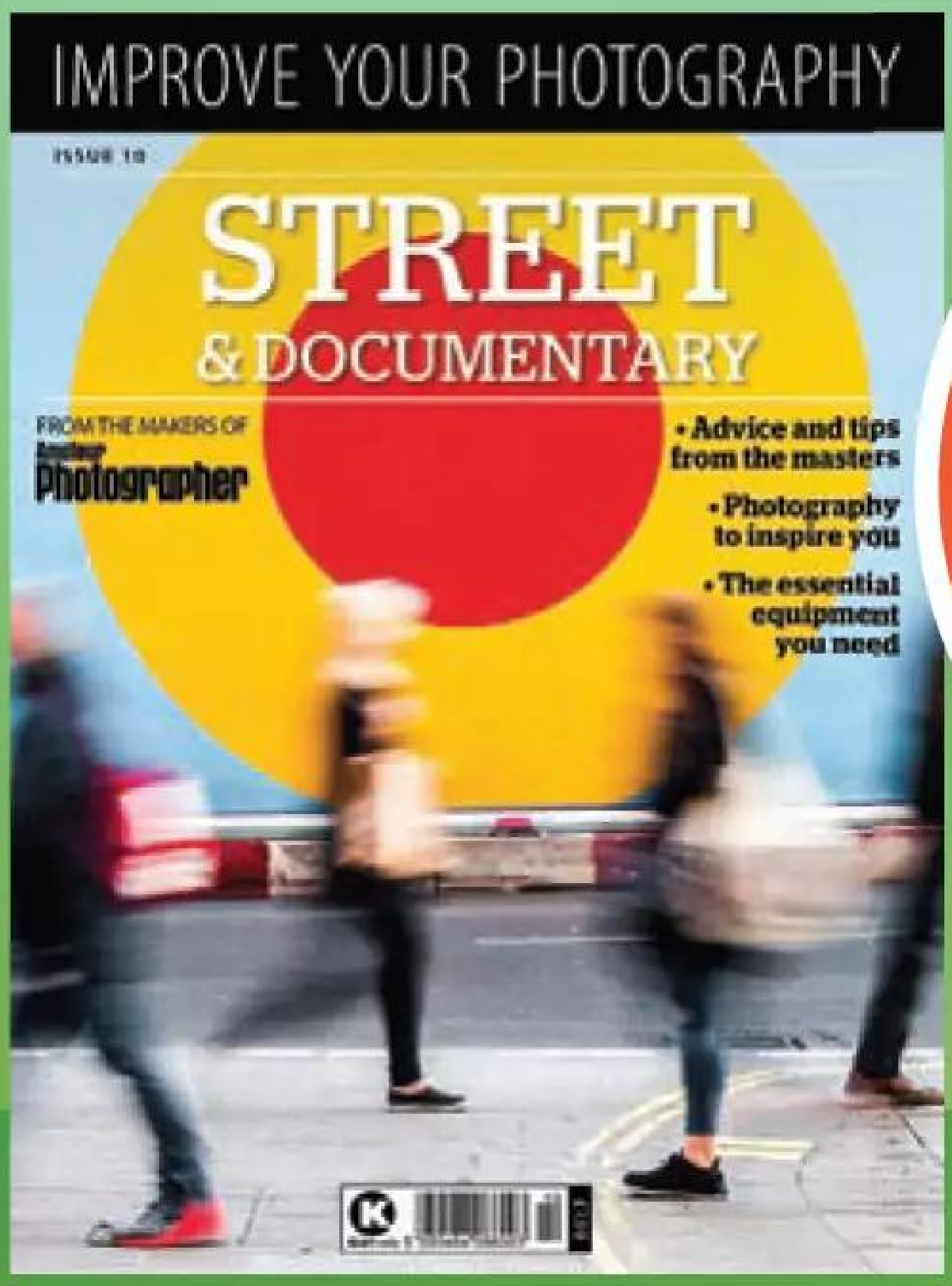
TRAVEL


IMPROVE YOUR PHOTOGRAPHY
PHOTOSHOP & LIGHTROOM
FROM THE MAKERS OF Amateur Photographer
The essential skills you need
Advice and tips from the masters
Photography to inspire you

PHOTOSHOP

IMPROVE YOUR PHOTOGRAPHY
BLACK & WHITE
FROM THE MAKERS OF Amateur Photographer
The essential equipment you need
Advice and tips from the masters
Photography to inspire you

BLACK & WHITE

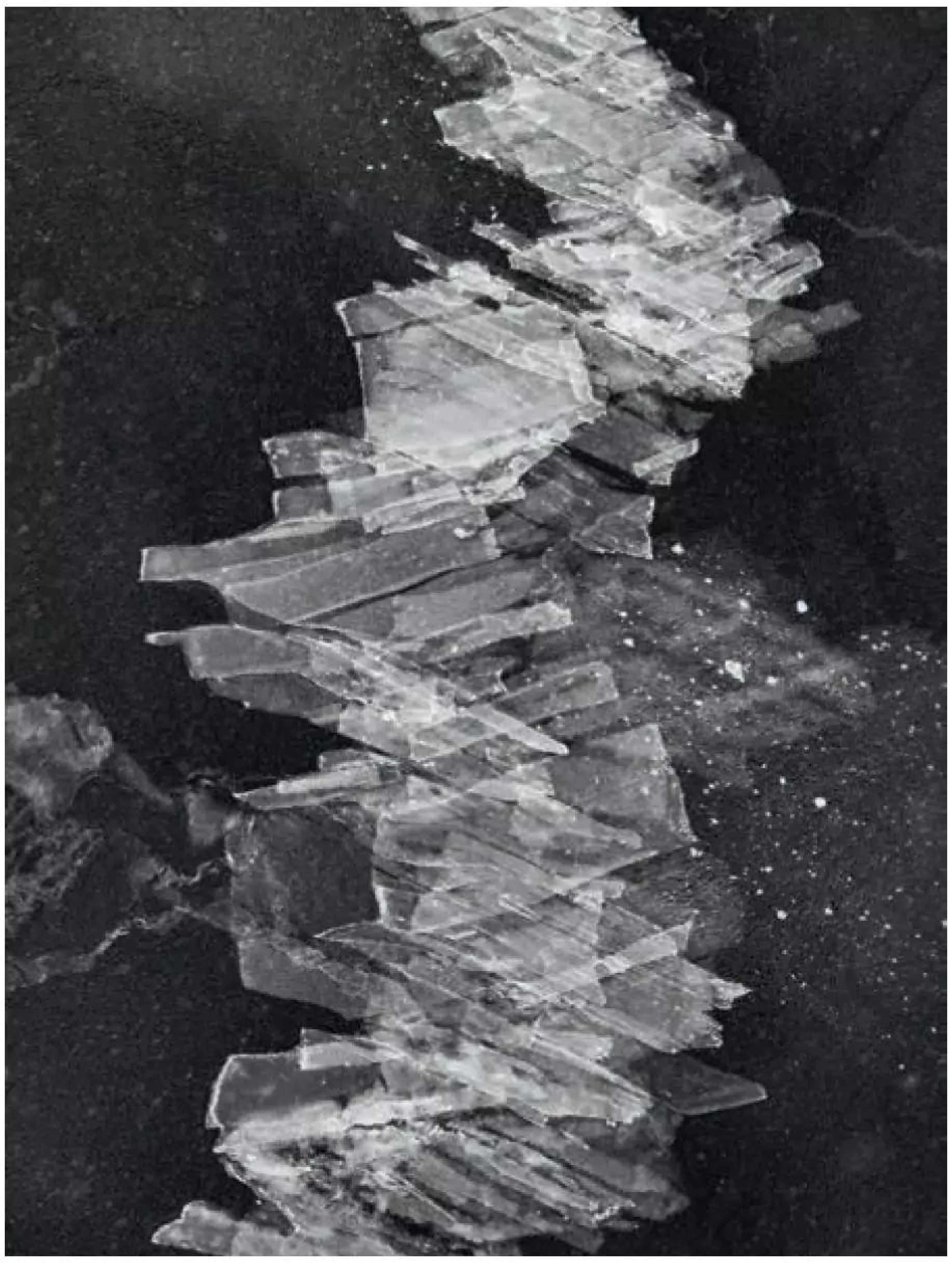

IMPROVE YOUR PHOTOGRAPHY
STREET & DOCUMENTARY
FROM THE MAKERS OF Amateur Photographer
Advice and tips from the masters
Photography to inspire you
The essential equipment you need

STREET & DOCUMENTARY

ORDER TODAY FROM £7.99

VISIT SHOP.KELSEY.CO.UK/IYP

SCAN ME



Top: Event Horizon, #113. Poland, Feb 2021 Motorised paraglider, Dudek Report'air, Fujifilm GFX100, GF100mm, 1/1600s at f/5.6, ISO 500

Above: Event Horizon, #132. Poland, Feb 2021 Motorised paraglider, Dudek Report'air, Fujifilm GFX100, GF100mm, 1/1600s at f/5, ISO 500

#206. Poland, Feb 2021. Motorised paraglider, Fujifilm GFX100, GF100mm, 1/1250s at f/5.6, ISO 400

I would refer to my own photographs to take pictures; it was like I was blind with no reflexes. In my case it's all about the experience. When taking off, since I rarely know what I'm going to see, I just fly and then come back to Earth – like from a hunt.'

The Event Horizon project didn't start life as a concrete idea. 'It just happened,' he says. 'When starting a project, I don't know what the result will be. I shot in black & white because I was curious about my ability to shoot monochromatically. What happens when I consciously give up colour. Suddenly, I began to see differently, and the photographs reflect this state. It's wonderful that just thinking about the medium changes the vision – and in the end everything was reflected.'

Kacper has won several awards over his photographic career. Not surprisingly, he has a philosophical take on this process too. 'An award is like a key. It can open a door to a meeting, a conversation, a contact. It is also a boost of energy. I know that my effort matters, so I can confidently continue further exploration. Competitions are an important tool for development: just prepping a submission is working on your own material. Reviewing previous submissions – not always winning ones – is very educational, because I can see my own development. Or regression.'

As for his most recent win at the Sony World Photography Awards, he's just pleased that his work can still stand out in a market saturated by drone photography and more besides. 'Today, AI is emerging and meaning you don't even need to have a drone and take pictures to get an image. Nevertheless, the efforts of a dinosaur like me can still bring new insights. I hope that success in this competition is a stage in the journey, that they won't stop there, and that my photos will find their way onto the walls of collectors, and perhaps spark the interest of curators and critics to work on more upcoming exhibitions.'

Right now, Kacper is working on two different but perhaps equally important things. 'I'm trying to see whether I can reach such a state of presence on the ground that I want to reach for the camera and take a picture… I'm also working on a book about 27 years with my head in the clouds.'

I can't help but wonder if Kacper has any advice for those thinking of giving something similar a go – albeit it being rare to come across others with such daring ambition. 'Be careful before you fly a paraglider for the first time. The experience can change your whole life. It can be extremely addictive.' AP

You can see more of Kacper's work at his website, **kacperkowalski.pl**

From the makers of Amateur Photographer magazine

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO FILM PHOTOGRAPHY

Bored of the same old digital images? Transform your photography by rediscovering film
THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO
FILM PHOTOGRAPHY
Basics of film photography
Setting up a home darkroom
Digitising your film for sharing
More than 500 expert tips
ONLY £9.99
+ postage
Choosing the right film • Colour or b&w? • Tips from top film shooters

The film photography revival goes from strength to strength, so we celebrate the joys of analogue shooting in this packed, 132 page special. If you're new to film photography, we help you get started quickly, and there are also lots of tips for more experienced film shooters. From choosing the right film to getting your negatives scanned or printed, here is all you need to know. Top film shooters also reveal how to add mood and atmosphere and there's a detailed guide to getting the film look digitally, using popular photo-editing software. The future for film photography has never looked brighter!

- More than 500 expert tips over 132 pages
- What you need to get started
- Best affordable film to buy
- How to develop and scan film
- Add mood and atmosphere
- Secrets of top film shooters
- Get the film look digitally

ORDER YOUR COPY TODAY

Visit **shop.kelsey.co.uk/filmphoto**
Call on **01959 543 747** and quote **BKZAMPFILM**

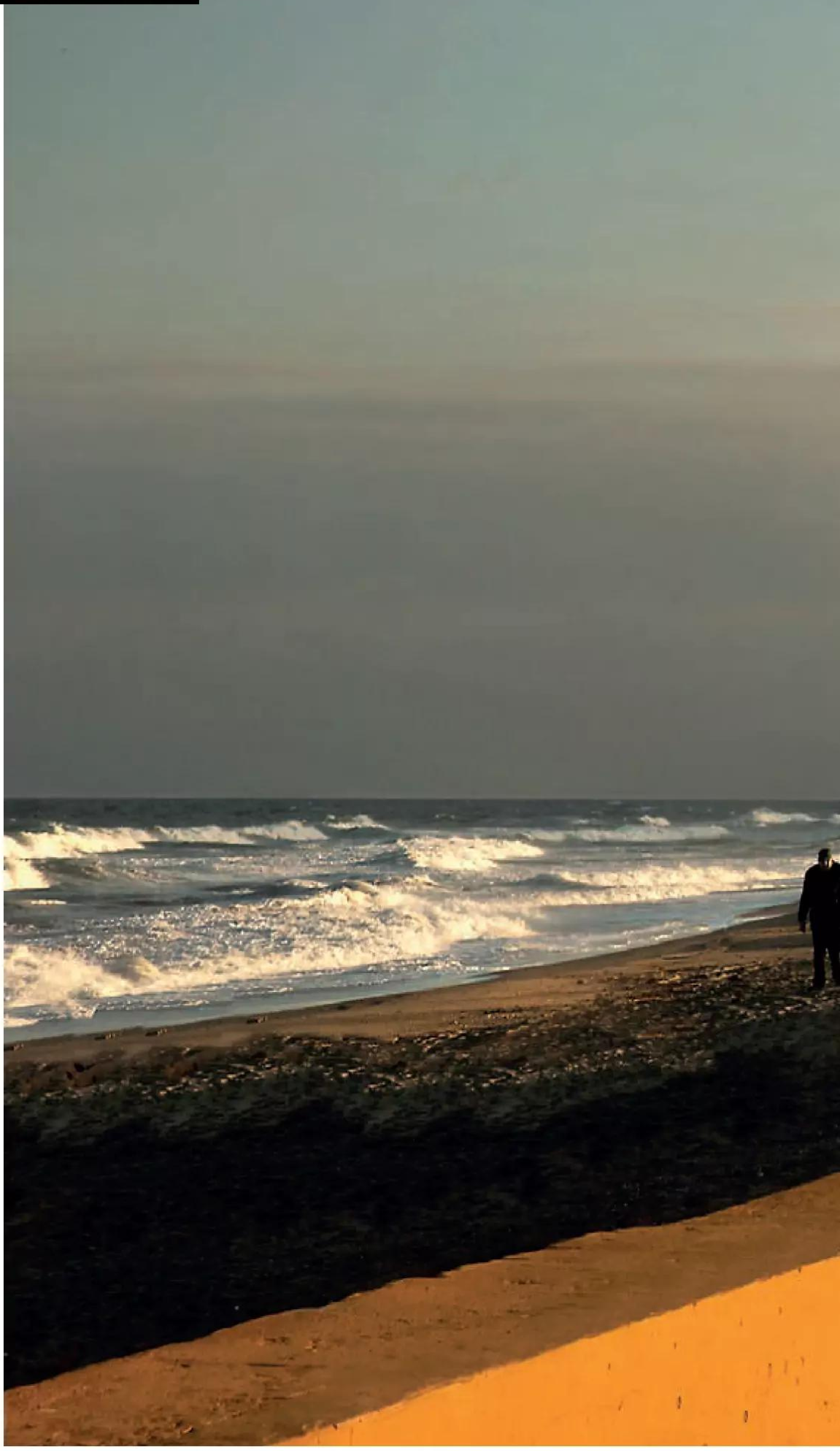
Lines are open Mon-Fri 8.30am to 5.30pm. Calls are charged at your standard network rate.

SCAN ME

Towards the Rock of Gibraltar

By Charlie Waite

On a trip to southern Europe, Charlie Waite finds himself doing battle with this iconic limestone monolith, as **Ailsa McWhinnie** discovers


© CHARLIE WAITE

At 426m high, the Rock of Gibraltar dominates the tiny British overseas territory of Gibraltar on the southwestern tip of Europe. More than 300 years ago, thanks to the treaty of Utrecht, it was handed to Britain by Spain – and for such a small area, it has remained a political hotspot ever since. With branches of Marks and Spencer, Morrisons, Next and Debenhams, its high streets feel as British as its residents, but of the 20,172 residents who voted in the 2016 EU referendum, a colossal 19,322 voted to remain.

Although it dominates the view from almost everywhere in the area, the iconic Rock of Gibraltar is surprisingly difficult to photograph well. All around its base are pretty unsightly modern blocks of offices and flats, and roads packed with cars. 'I've always struggled with it,' says landscape photographer Charlie Waite. He likes to take his camera to this strangely fascinating part of the world fairly regularly. 'Every so often, I spend four or five days in Andalucia,' he says. 'As you head west along the coast towards Cadiz, it becomes pretty interesting and chaotic, and the almond blossom in the middle of February is a full-on hit of spring.'

Finding the picture

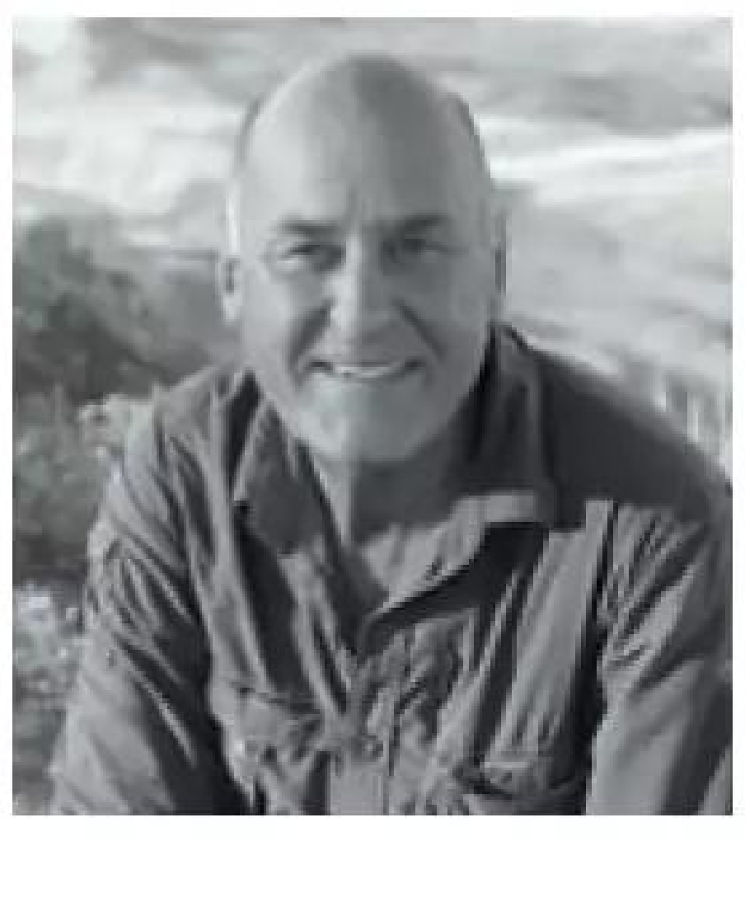
On this occasion, he took a stroll along what he describes as 'the fabulously empty beaches', choosing to walk away from the Rock of Gibraltar , rather than towards it. 'From a distance, it's as if the rock becomes even more formidable, even though it's in the background,' he says. 'It looked good, but I didn't really know what to do with it. There were components that worked, and then I realised it was about making the scene appear jagged. It's not a very friendly rock.'

Knowing he wanted to retain this sense of dominance yet distance, it was then a question of finding a foreground that would work with the background. As is so often the case, once you really start looking, something presents itself. So it was that Charlie came across a bright orange wall that immediately grabbed his attention. 'You just don't see orange walls like this in the UK. It was bizarre and a bit surreal, and I spent about two hours thinking about how to get that wall to hook up with the Rock of Gibraltar.'

It was at this point that the steps in the lower right-hand corner of the frame took on a particular significance. 'I realised they seemed to work,' Charlie recalls. 'You step up once, and then there's another one.'

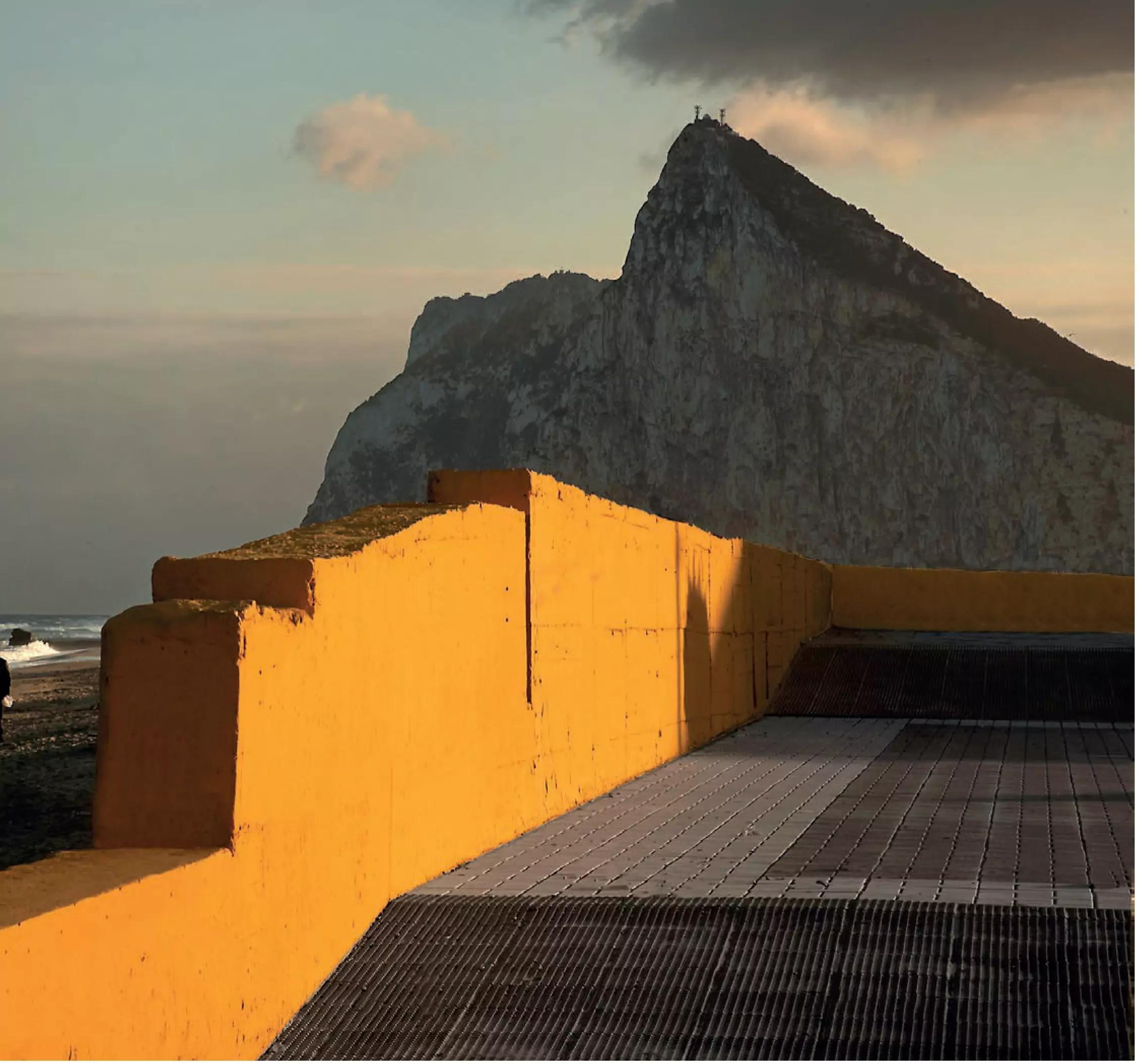
Admitting that the sky wasn't

> **'You just don't see orange walls like this in the UK. It was bizarre and a bit surreal. I spent about two hours thinking about how to get that wall to hook up with the rock'**



Charlie Waite

Charlie Waite is one of the UK's best-known landscape photographers. He has published numerous books, tutored aspiring photographers from across the world, and is founder of the Take a View Landscape Photographer of the Year competition. His latest ebook, *Behind the Photograph*, can be bought and downloaded at **www.charliewaite.com**.



'wow', he knew the composition needed something extra that would pull together every element. 'It was pretty dead,' he says, 'and it needed something to animate it. Although the waves were good, they weren't enough. Then, would you believe, enter left was a man with a bag. It was an absolute gift. He wasn't so close as to be identifiable, but it brought life into that part of the photograph. I almost waited for him to go, but I'm glad I didn't. And the fact that his carrier bag was yellow completed everything.'

One of Charlie's concerns was that he might be accused of increasing the saturation of the orange wall, which was already being intensified by the mid-afternoon winter light. After all, it looked unrealistic to him – why wouldn't it be the same for someone who wasn't actually there at the time? 'It can ruin the photograph if someone is suspicious of it,' he says. 'So I took a shot of the scene both on my phone and with a different camera, to make sure I'd got it right. And even then, I ended up actually reducing the colour slightly when I processed the image.'

A different direction

Noting that this image doesn't fall into his usual 'signature style' of photography, Charlie says he's going through what he calls a 'geometric' phase. 'It might be a brief flurry. And it's not that I don't want to do "rocks, seas and trees", it's just that in this instance I wanted to hook up a bit of architecture that has a utilitarian function – namely the wall, which is a sea defence – with the distant rock. Some people who look at my efforts might think, "What the hell is that?" but I'm OK with that. We're all just having a go at figuring out what life is about, and photographers do it through photography.'

CHARLIE'S KIT

For this image, Charlie Waite used a Nikon D800 with 24-120mm f/4 lens. The exposure was 1/60sec at f/22, ISO 250. The focal length of the lens was 92mm, making it a short telephoto landscape scene. The sky didn't require the use of any ND grads. 'I've never been a big fan of super-wide images,' Charlie says. 'A wideangle shot looks like a wideangle, and doesn't have any parity with what the eye sees. For this image, the wall and rock needed to be compressed and snuggle up to each other a bit more, hence the focal length.'

Spring into action

As temperatures begin to rise and the days become longer, now is the perfect time to get outdoors. We speak to three professionals for their tips on shooting all manner of subjects

Guy Edwardes

Based in his home county of Dorset, Guy Edwardes has been a professional landscape and nature photographer for over 25 years. His work has been widely published worldwide and he runs a series of popular photographic workshops. Visit **www.guyedwardes.com**

Ensure front-to-back sharpness

When shooting spring landscapes, you may wish to include an expanse of flowers in the foreground. Even when using a wideangle lens, you'll still have to take great care to achieve perfect front-to-back sharpness. The simplest way is to employ hyperfocal focusing, where you focus on a precise point (that varies according to the subject distance and focal length used) that will allow complete sharpness throughout the scene at your chosen aperture. Alternatively focus-stacking can be used to achieve even better sharpness by using software to stack a series of images taken using a middle aperture. This eliminates the softening effects of diffraction but can only really be used if the foreground flowers are not moving in the breeze!

Allow light to dictate location

Try to choose your locations based on the weather and lighting conditions on the day. Open landscapes and coastal areas look great bathed in early morning or late evening sunlight, but shady woodlands often work better in overcast or foggy conditions where the reduced contrast is beneficial, and colours will be recorded more accurately.

Timing is critical

The most vibrant green foliage and colourful springtime flowers are at their best for only a couple of weeks, so it's essential to be prepared and to act quickly to make the most of them. Bluebells will last no more than a couple of weeks, wild garlic even less. Peak colours move slowly north up the UK and timings can vary from year to year. It's best to check locations regularly to keep an eye on how the season is developing.

Try astrophotography

From early April the core of the Milky Way begins to become visible during the early hours of the morning, especially in the south of the UK. Find a location with minimal light pollution and foreground interest. For best results you'll need a wideangle lens with a fast aperture and a camera capable of delivering reasonably clean images at very high ISO. Modern noise reduction software such as DxO PureRAW 2 does a great job of reducing noise without removing the fainter stars.

RECOMMENDED KIT

Your polarising filter is your friend

A polarising filter is particularly useful when shooting springtime landscapes as it helps to remove reflections from the fresh lime-green foliage, eliminating highlights and intensifying the colours in your image.

Download useful apps

Planning is particularly important at this time of the year and there are a variety of useful smartphone apps available that can help you to be in the right place at the right time to capture perfect spring landscapes.

- Planit Pro www.yingwentech.com
- Photo Ephemeris photoephemeris.com
- PhotoPills www.photopills.com

Set your alarm clock early!

The best conditions often occur very early in the morning when the breeze is at its lightest, when there's a chance of mist and not many people about. Head out well before dawn to utilise 'blue hour' and then the first rays of golden light after sunrise. Give yourself extra time to find the perfect vantage point.

Shoot into the light

Shooting into the light can produce very atmospheric images. However, care must be taken to eliminate flare from the sun. This can be achieved by concealing the sun behind a tree trunk or leaf. Owing to the limited dynamic range of most camera sensors, you may need to shoot a bracketed set of exposures to capture all the tones. These can be automatically blended in software such as Adobe Lightroom (Merge to HDR) to create a single file with expanded dynamic range. Once processed the image should show detail throughout, from the deepest shadows to the brightest highlights.

Research your location

There are many well-known locations to photograph bluebell woods and other wildflower landscapes around the UK. However, there are even more hidden away waiting to be discovered! Take time to scout new locations, research online and study maps before the season reaches its peak. In some cases, it may be necessary to ask the landowner for permission to enter woods and other areas that don't have public access. Speak to your local wildlife trust or the Woodland Trust to ask if there are any potentially good spots hidden away on their nature reserves.

Perdita Petzl

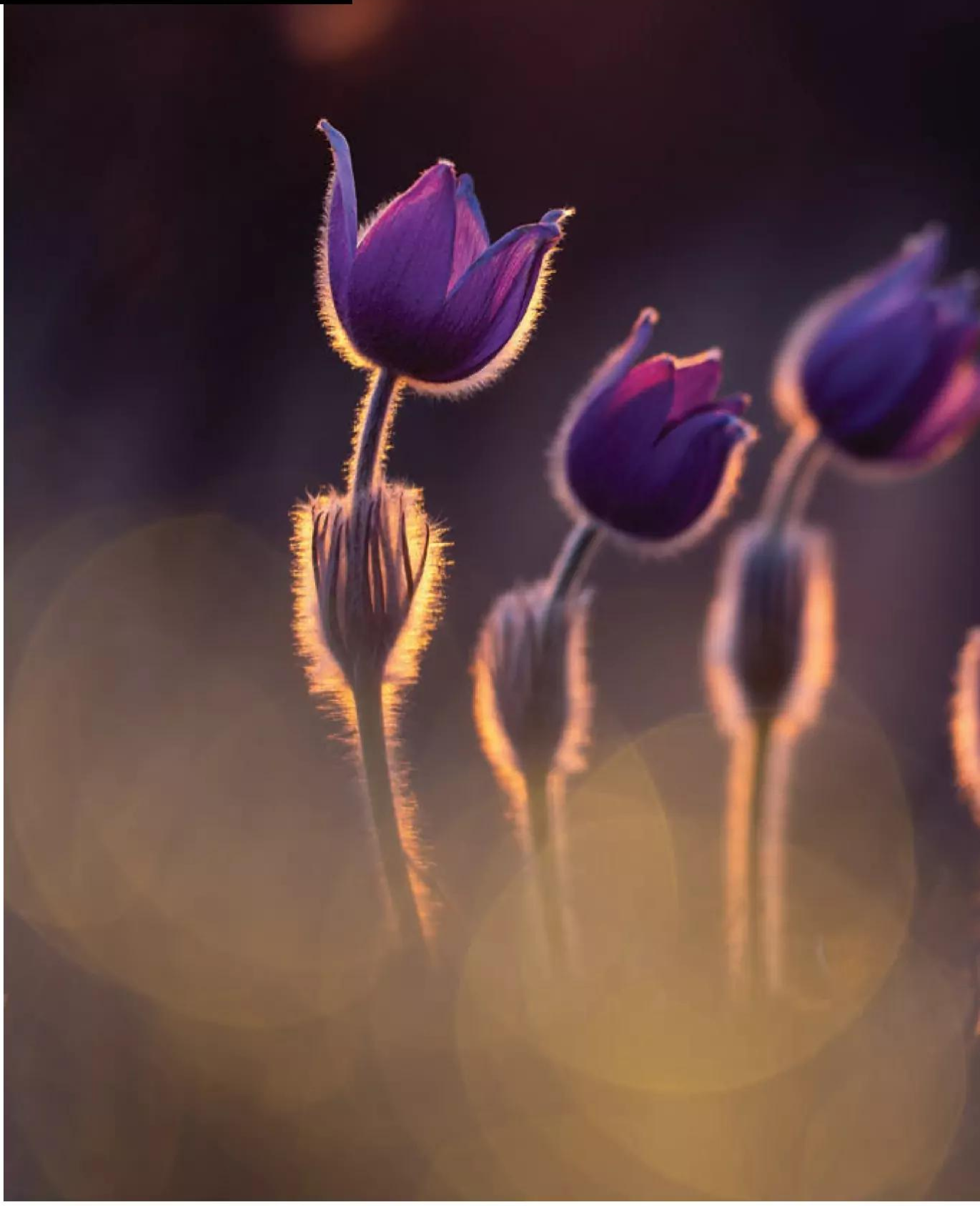
Perdita is an award-winning photographer, author, and judge. She specialises in photographing the small world and runs her own workshops and webinars. See more at **www.perditapetzl.at**, **@perdita_petzl** on Insta, **@NaturfotografiePetzl** on Facebook.

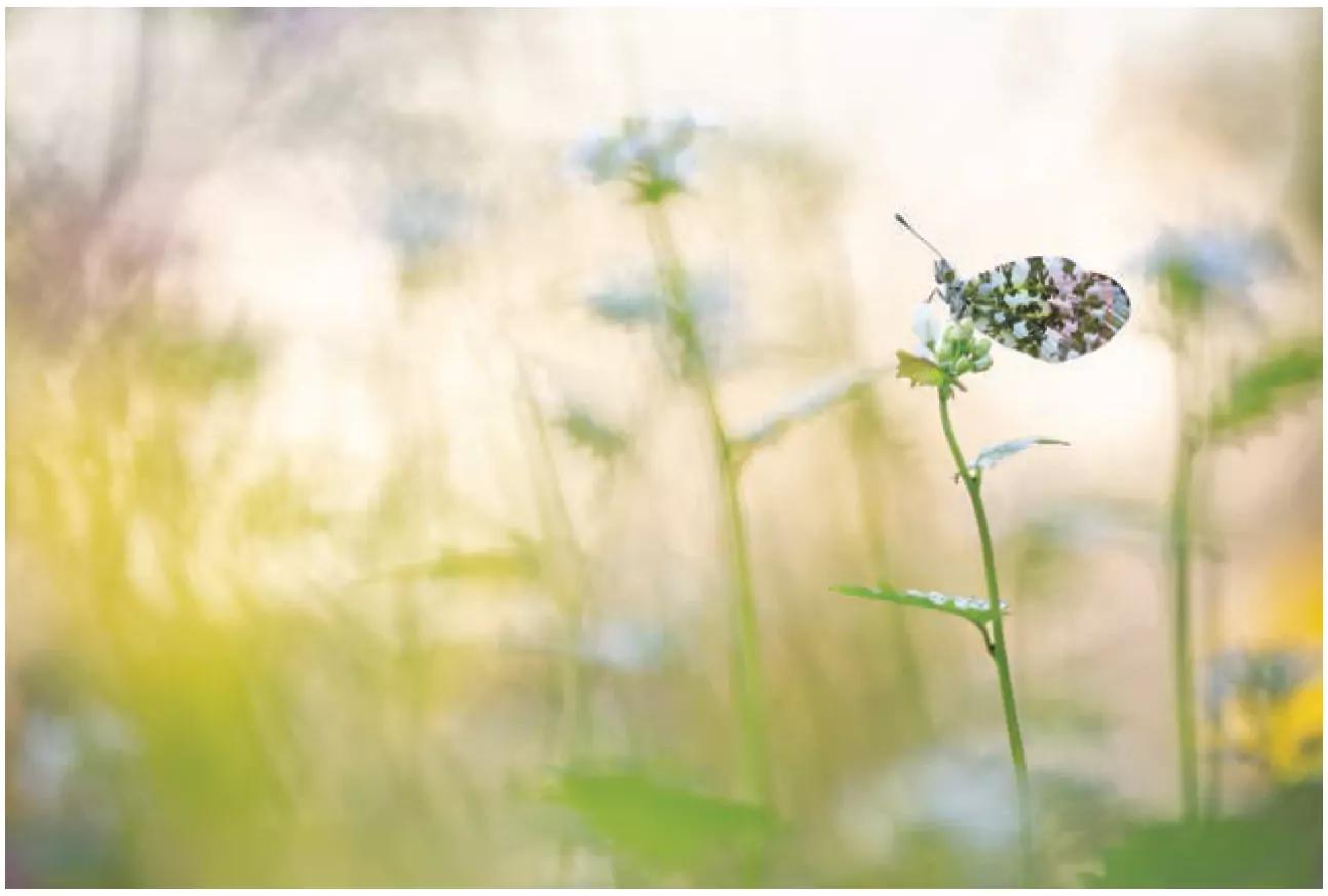
Worm's eye view

When photographing plants and animals, working with low camera angles is often best. Try to capture your subject at eye level. It's this low angle of view that makes your subject the main focal point, while distracting elements in the foreground and background disappear into an attractive blur. For the best results keep trying new perspectives and experiment by moving the camera a few inches to the left or right. Small changes often have a surprisingly big impact and can transform a good photo into a great one!

Best time of day

For the most harmonious results and to get the best natural light, photograph your subjects in the morning or late in the afternoon – this applies to both wildlife and plants. At this time of day, the sun is low and the light is soft, so you don't have to worry about harsh contrasts. If you want to photograph early bloomers, you have to know your subjects for choosing the perfect time of day: some plants close their petals overnight and therefore they are not equally photogenic at all times of the day. Liverworts, for example, open their blossoms around 8am – depending on the temperatures and cloudiness.



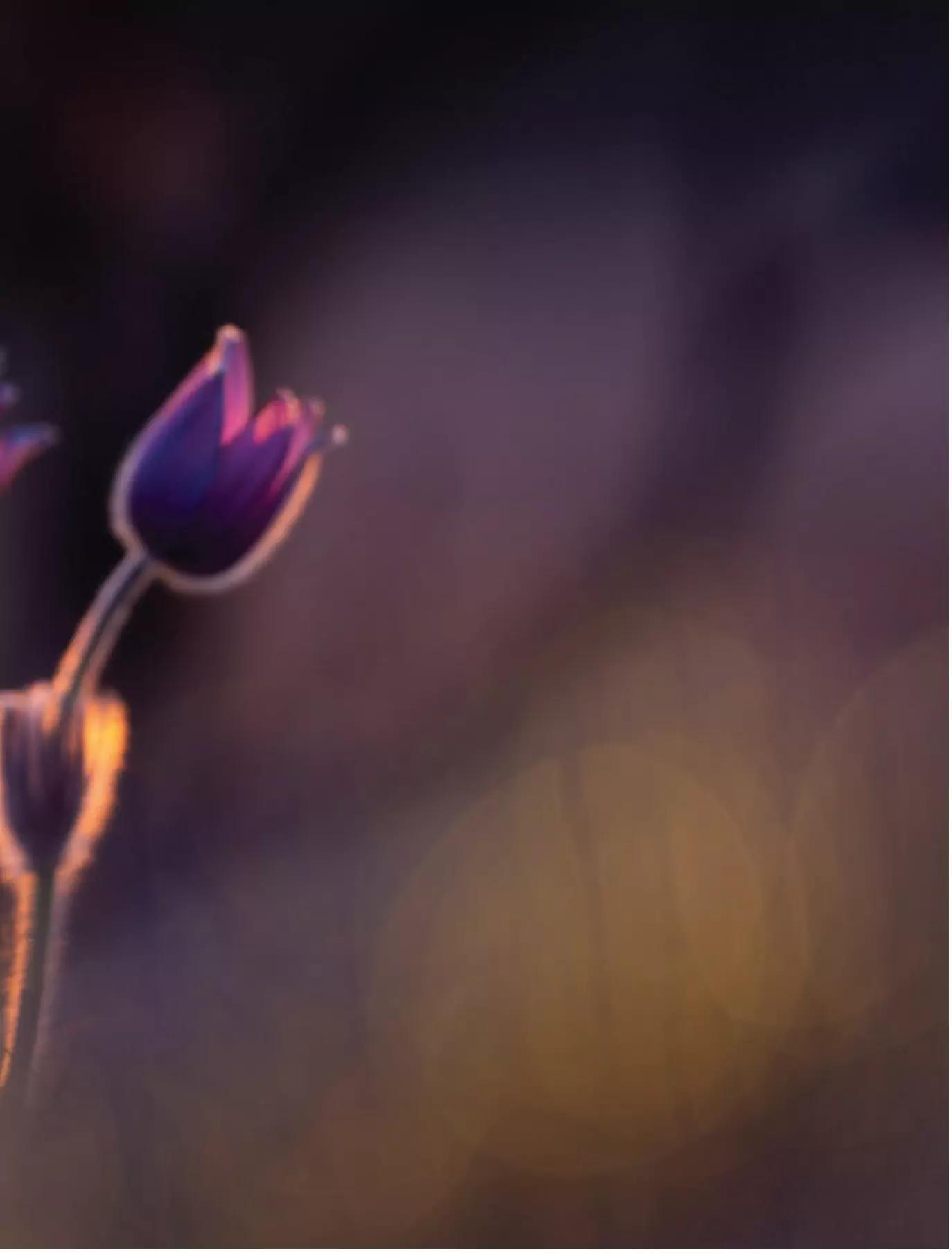


Colours and mood

Try to shoot when the sunlight is not directly hitting your subject. Create some shade with a small folding diffuser and photograph your subject against a sunlit background and expose to the right – that will lead to soft pastel colours. For more vibrant results you can play around with contrasting colours. To create a dreamy feel, photograph against the light. Be sure to keep an eye on the optimal exposure and be careful not to overexpose bright parts of the image.

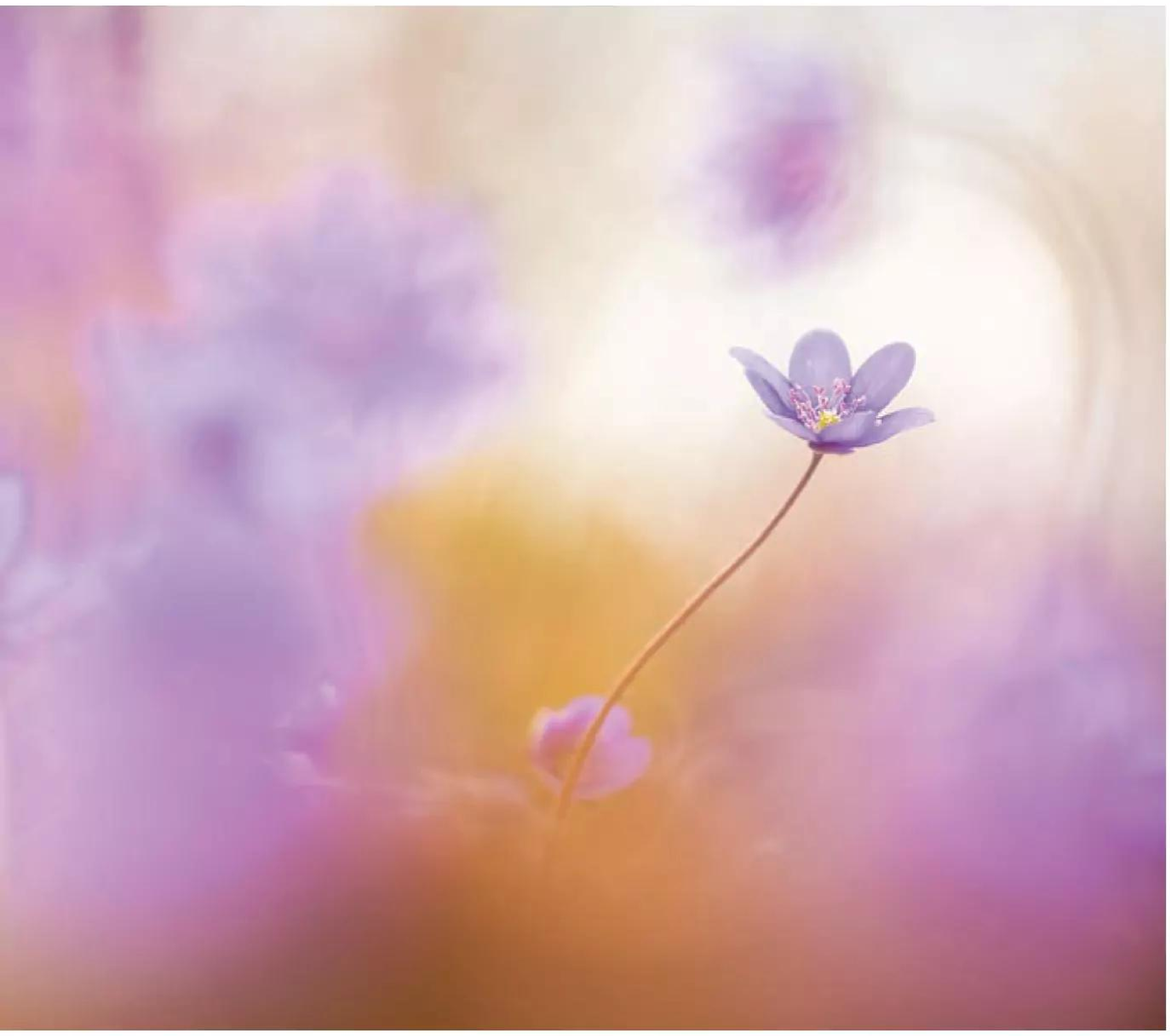
Create a blurred effect

Shoot your subject through plants growing in the foreground and use a wide aperture – the wider, the better. This will result in your subject being sharp whilst the rest of the frame is completely out of focus. The blurry plants in the foreground will entwine attractively around the subject. This can also create leading lines which all helps with the composition. Working with a smaller magnification scale can help you to put your subject in relation to the environment or depict a habitat. Work with the camera's live view to get a good impression of what the photograph will look like before pressing the shutter.



Understanding your subject

Knowing the optimal time to photograph your subject will help you get great results. For example, when nights are cold, insects are lethargic first thing in the morning and need to warm up before they are ready to fly. This is the perfect time to set up your gear, compose, and focus your photo. But be careful, since as soon as insects are exposed to the sun, it doesn't take long until they become more active. If you are not an early riser, you can also photograph butterflies in the late afternoon or early evening when they are already roosting. Try to look for insects in shady areas – they cool down faster and stay calmer! Try to approach very carefully, so as not to startle the butterflies.



Eye focus

When photographing wildlife, always stay focused so you don't risk missing the perfect moment. When you want to be more spontaneous with your composition, make use of your camera's AF modes – Canon has an Eye Detection AF, which is great. But watch out when you're shooting with backlight as it may not be as accurate, in which case it is better to set the focus point manually to achieve great results.

RECOMMENDED KIT

Tripod or beanbag

When photographing flowers or small animals, use a bean bag. This enables you to go down to ground level and to shoot your subjects at eye level. A sturdy tripod with a good-quality ballhead is the perfect choice for shooting insects. You can set up the shot without hassle. If you also use a tripod collar, you can easily switch from landscape to portrait format.

LED light

I always carry a small LED light in my bag. This is perfect to brighten a dark foreground or unsightly shadows.

Kerry Unwin

Kerry is an award-winning, published baby, child and family photographer who specialises in newborn photography. See **www.kerryunwinphotography.co.uk** and **@kerryunwinphotography** on Facebook and Instagram.

Best time of day

Speak to any seasoned photographer and they'll tell you that the optimum time of day to photograph portraits on location is around one hour after sunrise or one hour before sunset. This is because the sun is lower in the sky and it produces a beautiful, warm and soft light that is extremely flattering to subjects, particularly skin tones. Once the sun starts to rise the light becomes harsher and you may encounter blown-out highlights and strong shadows. Having offered that advice, I very rarely shoot at those times. As a baby, child, and family photographer the most important element of my outdoor photo sessions are happy, rested children and relaxed, non-rushed parents. This means I'm forced to embrace the sunlight, working around naptimes and mealtimes so often shooting between 10am and 3pm. I have a selection of stunning locations nearby, for all eventualities where there is shade available and beautiful backdrops. When you're shooting during these times look for shade from trees, buildings and walls and position your subject right at the very edge of the shade. To find the ideal spot, stand in the sunlight and walk backwards until you stop squinting at the sun; this way the subjects should be evenly lit without losing them in the shadows. Be aware of dappled light though, as this causes uneven light spots which you'll kick yourself for not noticing later!

Watch out for colour casts

Spring is a beautiful season, full of colour, with amazing backdrops to really bring life to your portraits. Look out for colour casts though, especially with all the bright greenery around. Green colour casting happens when light reflects off the grass and trees and gives your subject a much-unwanted green hue to their skin. This is another reason to try to find open shade and place your subject at the edge of it, as the closer you shoot to the trees the more likely you will encounter a green cast. Look for anything neutral to bounce light onto your subjects, such as pathways. If a green cast is unavoidable, don't panic, it's an easy fix in Photoshop.

Comfortable clothing

When it comes to clothing, the most important thing is that my clients are all warm and comfortable. That said, I do advise them to wear solid colour clothing, free of prints, patterns and logos so the images don't date, and patterns don't distract from the portrait. I always suggest neutral creams/white/grey/earthy colours as a base as this also helps avoid colour casting from brightly coloured clothing. I suggest they add pops of colour – I find blue/navy and yellow/mustard tones work well. If families can co-ordinate and pick out colours from each other's outfits, then that also helps to make images that are more pleasing to the eye.

Connect with your subject(s)

Connection with your subject is absolutely paramount. As photographers we can be guilty of concentrating too much on ensuring the conditions and the technical set-up is perfect, potentially missing key interactions and moments that capture special memories and images our clients will treasure forever. If photographing young children, keep a stash of 'tools' in your camera bag to entertain them. I have various noisy toys and sweets (obviously check with parents before dishing out the Haribo!) The best device I have is a little sound box. I often ask parents to press different buttons on the box behind my head. The all-time favourite noises with children (and a few parents… ha!) are burp and fart sounds!

Do a recce in advance

Always scout your location and have back-up options. Don't leave it until the day of the shoot to check out the area if you're working with paying clients. Anything could happen, from park closures and tree-felling to a local event taking place. Planning is always key.

Composition

It goes without saying that you need to keep an eye on straight horizons on location shoots but also make sure that these don't run so that they chop your subject's head off! Another tip is to check for inanimate objects/ plants 'growing' out of your subject's head!

RECOMMENDED KIT

Long lenses

I find that a longer focal length lens with a wide aperture works best for that sought-after creamy bokeh – a couple of favourites are the 135mm f/2 if you prefer primes or 70-200mm f/2.8 if zooms are more your thing. Because I photograph a lot of fast-moving children, I tend to opt for my zoom lenses outdoors.

Blanket

Blankets work really well for children and families to sit on to stop them getting muddy or wet, but can also work well to prevent a green cast if you need to sit them on grass. It's also handy to lie on (or even a big bin bag that I keep stuffed in my camera bag). I learnt that the hard way after laying down in fox poo!

Paul Sanders

Paul Sanders has over 30 years' experience as a professional photographer and picture editor. He began photographing landscapes to escape the pressure of his previous job, and uses mindfulness techniques to draw inspiration. He works mainly in black & white as he finds colour distracting. Find out more at **www.discoverstill.com**

Winter in black & white

Three of the UK's top landscape photographers deliver their top tips for capturing stunning black & white winter landscapes

ALL PICTURES ON THESE PAGES © PAUL SANDERS

1 Footprints

Nothing destroys a potentially beautiful photograph like a set of footprints, usually those of the photographer trying to decide on the best composition. I always work towards something and tread lightly, perhaps walking the long way around the edge of a field. I spend time thinking my shots through before I even venture into an area of pristine snow.

2 Light

There is no such thing as bad light – light is what it is and we should be grateful we can see it. Flat light works better for me than the wonderful golden light I see in others' work. Flat light is just as valuable as golden light because it lowers contrast and loses shadows, which can be useful when shooting in snow that's been walked on.

5 Get up, get out

Whatever the weather, get out of bed and go. Pictures don't take themselves and the biggest barrier to successful winter shots is our comfy cosy bed. Get out of bed an hour earlier than you think you need to and get on the road. Prep your kit the night before so you don't leave anything behind. With any luck, you'll be back before breakfast!

3 Wrap up

This almost goes without saying, but dress sensibly. When walking to a location you might get warm, so pack spare layers that you can wrap up in when you stop. Standing still will create snowy masterpieces, but will cause your body temperature to drop, especially in your hands and toes.

4 Patience

Patience is the biggest break you can give yourself. I often turn up at my chosen location to find things looking good but not quite feeling the power of the place. Waiting, watching and enjoying the experience will yield a better connection and deeper vision of a location. Be patient in all things.

6 Weather

The uncertainty of winter weather is something we should embrace. If it's cloudy one minute, the sun will burst through and deliver spotlight illumination, or the rain will be backlit as it tumbles from the heavens. Adapt to the changes and enjoy the opportunities they present, and you won't be disappointed.

7 Simplify

We all try to cram too many elements into our work. I prefer to compose from the inside out, starting with my main subject and expanding my view. I use this so that I don't become obsessed with certain elements that in the end detract from the story I'm telling rather than add value.

IN MY KIT BAG I ALWAYS HAVE

▼ Coffee and cake

It's important to wrap up warm, but your body uses energy so I always take a flask of hot milky coffee and cake – lemon drizzle is a favourite.

▼ LEE Filter system

I always use filters in the winter, especially graduated filters. When it is snowy or frosty, I usually invert the filter to tone down the foreground of the shot.

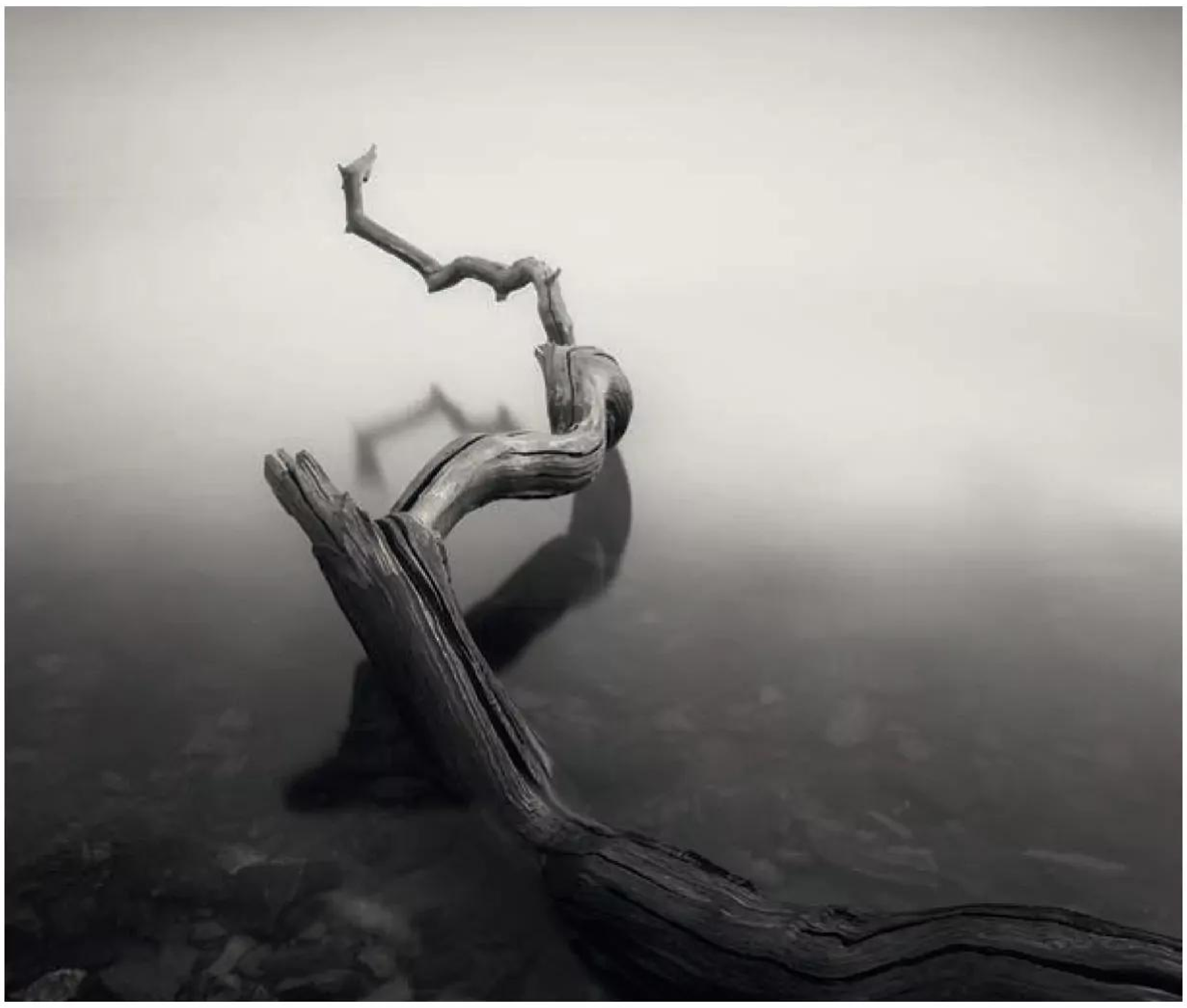
◀ Blunt umbrella

It shields the wind, rain and snow off my camera. The Blunt umbrellas are pretty much indestructible, which makes them a good investment.

Neil Burnell

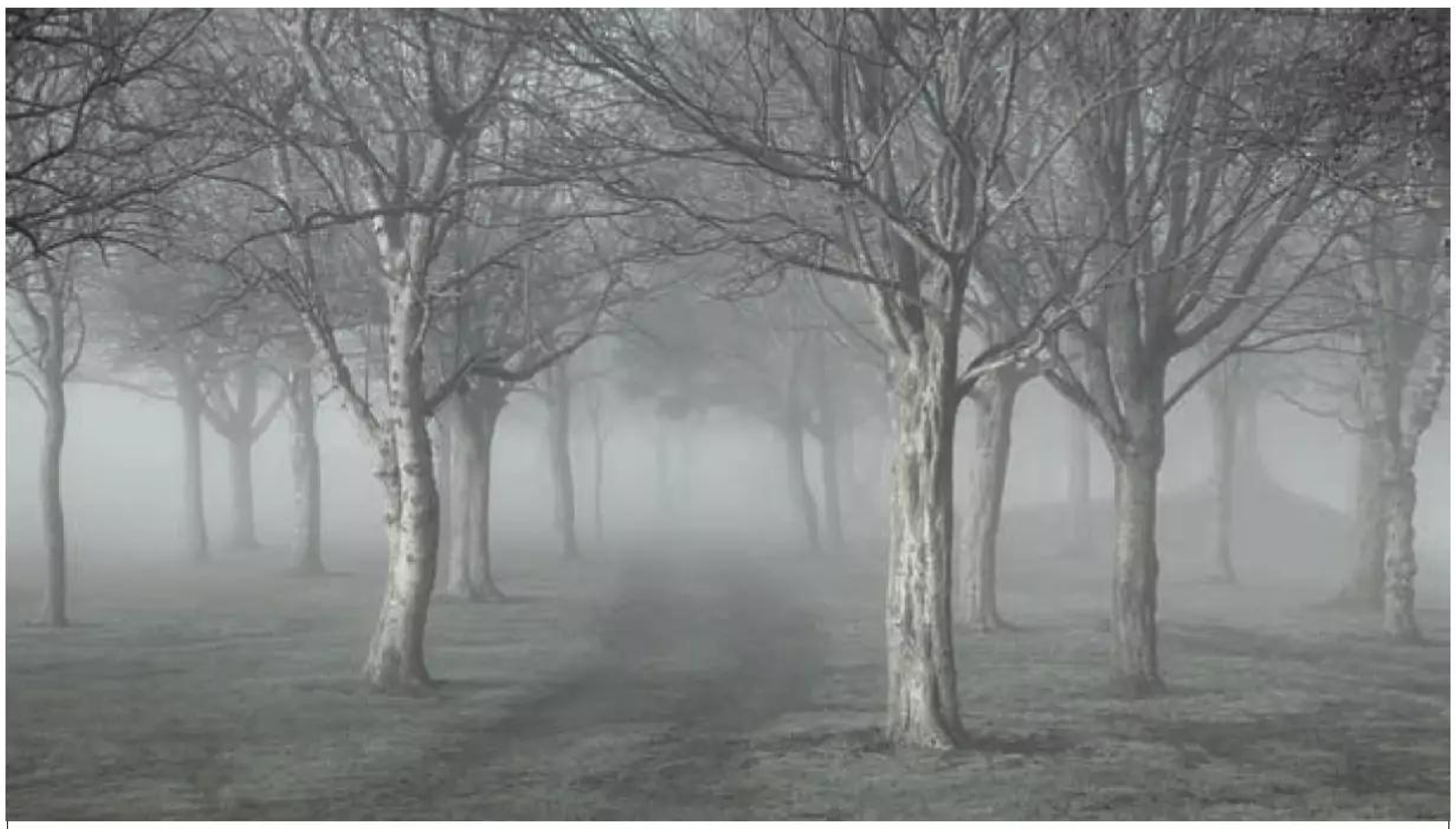
Neil Burnell is a multi award-winning photographer (including Amateur Photographer of the Year 2018) from Devon. Shooting the dramatic coast and moorland on his doorstep, Neil is an expert when it comes to cold and dramatic weather conditions. Find out more at **www.neilburnell.com**

Photographer Neil Burnell shares his top tips for taking monochrome images in the freezing depths of winter



1 Flat light

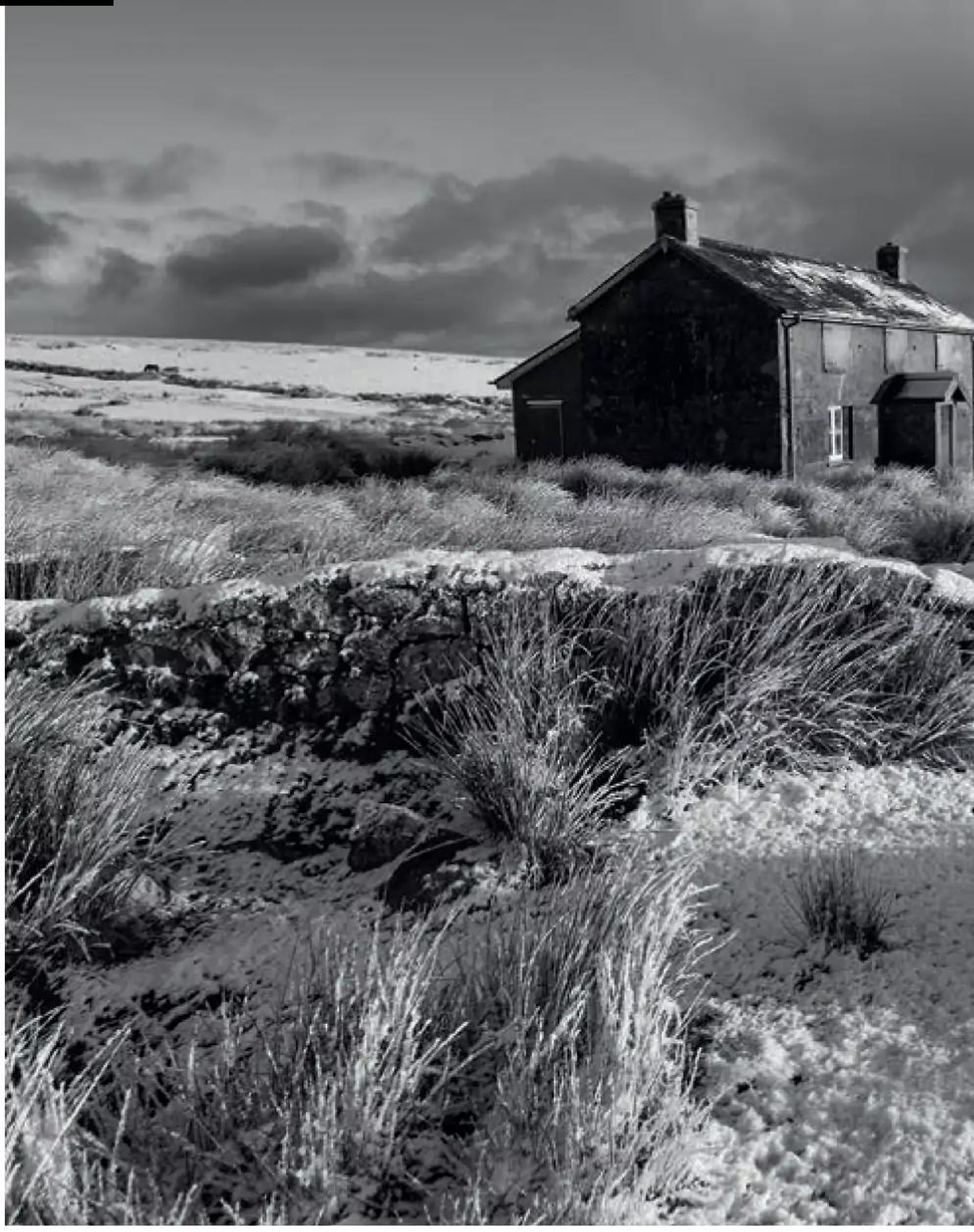
People seem to avoid going out in dull, overcast winter conditions, but this is when I particularly like to head out to shoot minimal long-exposure seascapes. I'll often wander to my local river looking for small scenes of driftwood or fallen trees. I tend to shoot towards the soft light, as this makes the water brighter and helps isolate the subject.

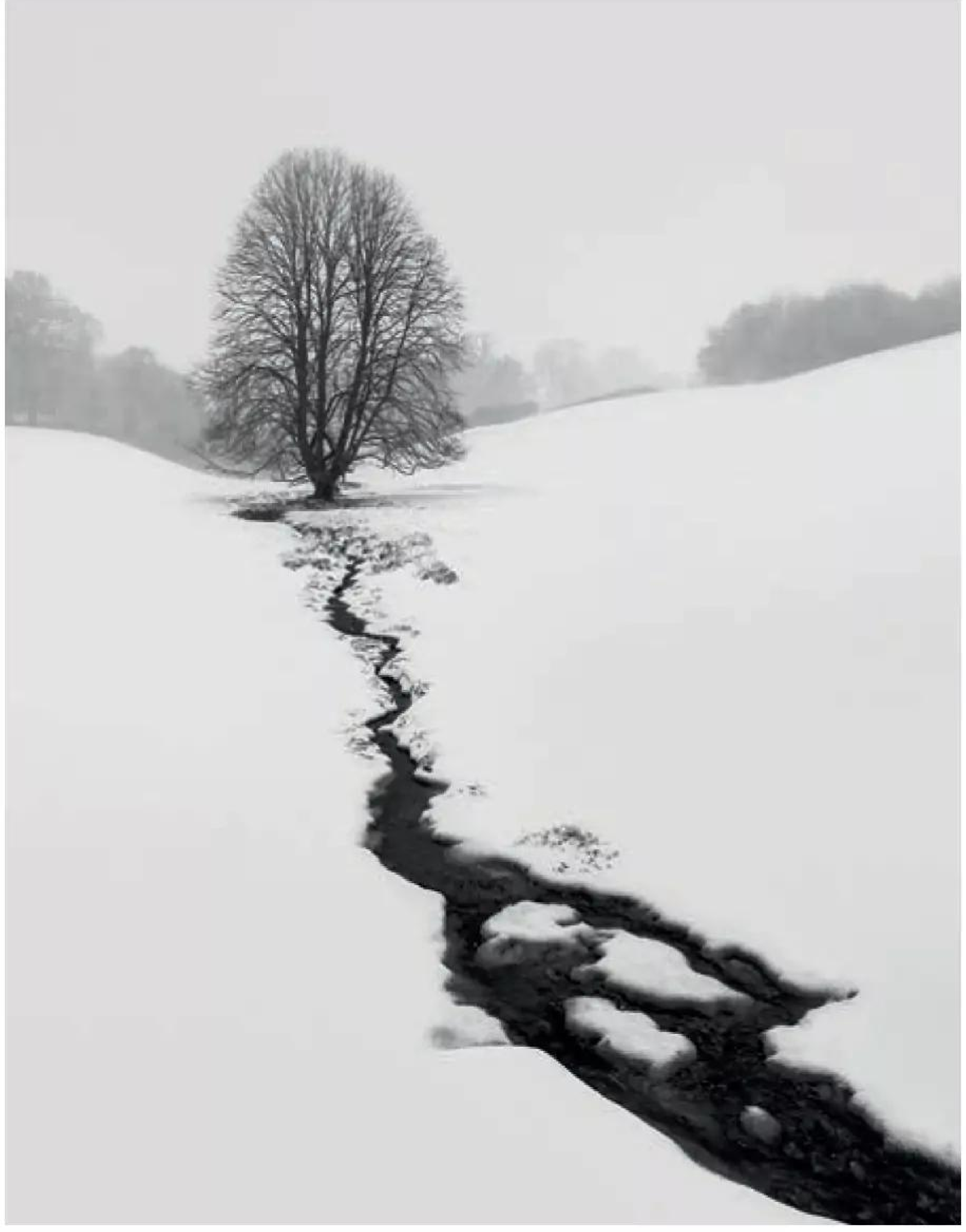


ALL PICTURES ON THESE PAGES © NEIL BIURNELL

2 Muted

Sometimes I'll envisage a scene as monochrome but actually prefer the muted colours. This is a shot I thought would be better in mono because I didnt like the greens in the raw file. Once I started to process it, however, I decided to mute the colours considerably and lose the harsh greens.





3 Shoot local

I don't have a suitable car to get me up on the moors when it snows, which can be frustrating. Last year I decided to go for a walk locally when I couldn't get to work in my car, and I was happy to find a few scenes that were completely transformed by the blanket of snow, which certainly transforms well as a monochrome image. Yes, I'm lucky to live close to this scene, but it's somewhere I wouldn't have tried if I was able to go further afield. It's always worth getting out, no matter where you live.

4 Plan ahead

Nun's Cross Farm is a place I've shot a few times during the year, but it's somewhere I've always wanted to shoot as a winter scene and one I had planned with a friend for some time. There are some places that just work better in the snow and nine times out of ten they work even better in black & white.

5 Noise

I'm going through a phase where I'm shooting more handheld images at higher ISO in certain scenes. Sometimes I feel you don't have to pick out every detail, so the grain rendered by shooting high ISO does not detract from the scene and can actually help create an atmosphere. In this shot, I've actually added grain and contrast to create a more atmospheric image.

6 Mood

Fog, mist and stormy weather are among my favourite conditions to shoot in and it's why I prefer the colder months, because this is when these conditions are more frequent. Such conditions often translate really well to black & white, and this style of atmospheric shot are my favourite images to shoot. I'll often look to the coast when I know there will be slightly rougher seas and just have fun playing with various exposures.

7 Ray of light

Woodland is not an easy subject, and it's especially hard to pick out compositions that work in black & white. I tend to look for a natural pathway through a woodland and pockets of light that help lead the viewer into the image, as this can work well for monochrome images in a woodland scene, particularly when there is a lot of chaos.

8 Shifting sands

I'll often shoot the same areas throughout the year and it amazes me how the environment can change throughout the seasons. This image of Westcombe Bay was taken during the winter months after heavy rain and rough seas. As a result, the sands had shifted and the rainfall had created a stream running to the ocean.

IN MY KIT BAG I ALWAYS HAVE

Shutter release

To avoid nudging the camera during those long exposure times, Neil uses a remote shutter release.

Lens cloth

There's nothing like a big raindrop running down the front of your lens to ruin your image. A lens cloth is essential.

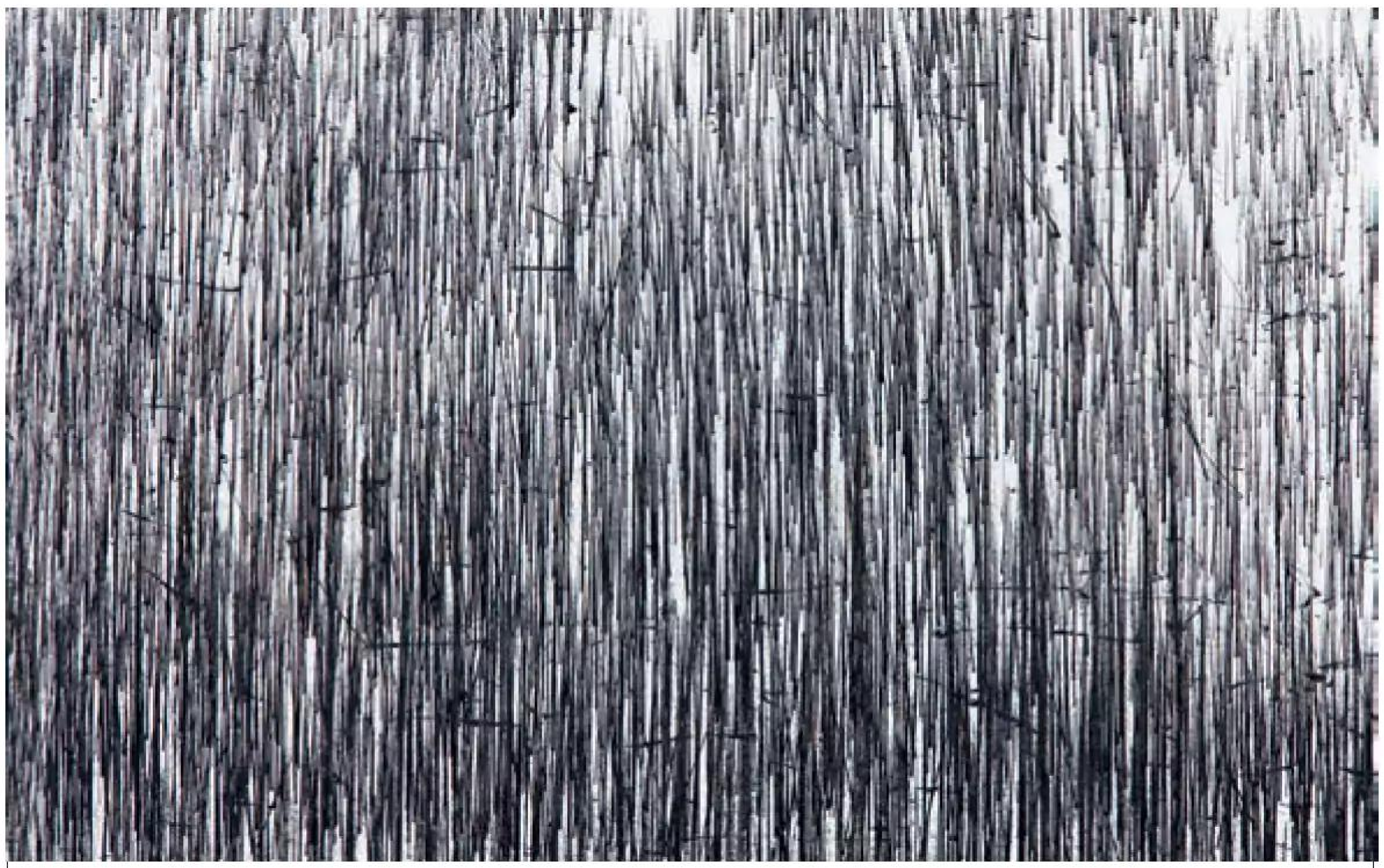
Umbrella

To keep the water and snow off your lens and camera, an umbrella can come in handy.

David Clapp

David Clapp is a landscape, architectural and travel photographer. A jack of all trades, he works for Canon UK, is a stock photographer for Getty Images and leads popular photographic tours across the world. David recently received a direct fellowship from the RPS. Visit **www.davidclapp.co.uk**

David Clapp shares his top tips for achieving perfect winter landscapes



1 Study and learn to see

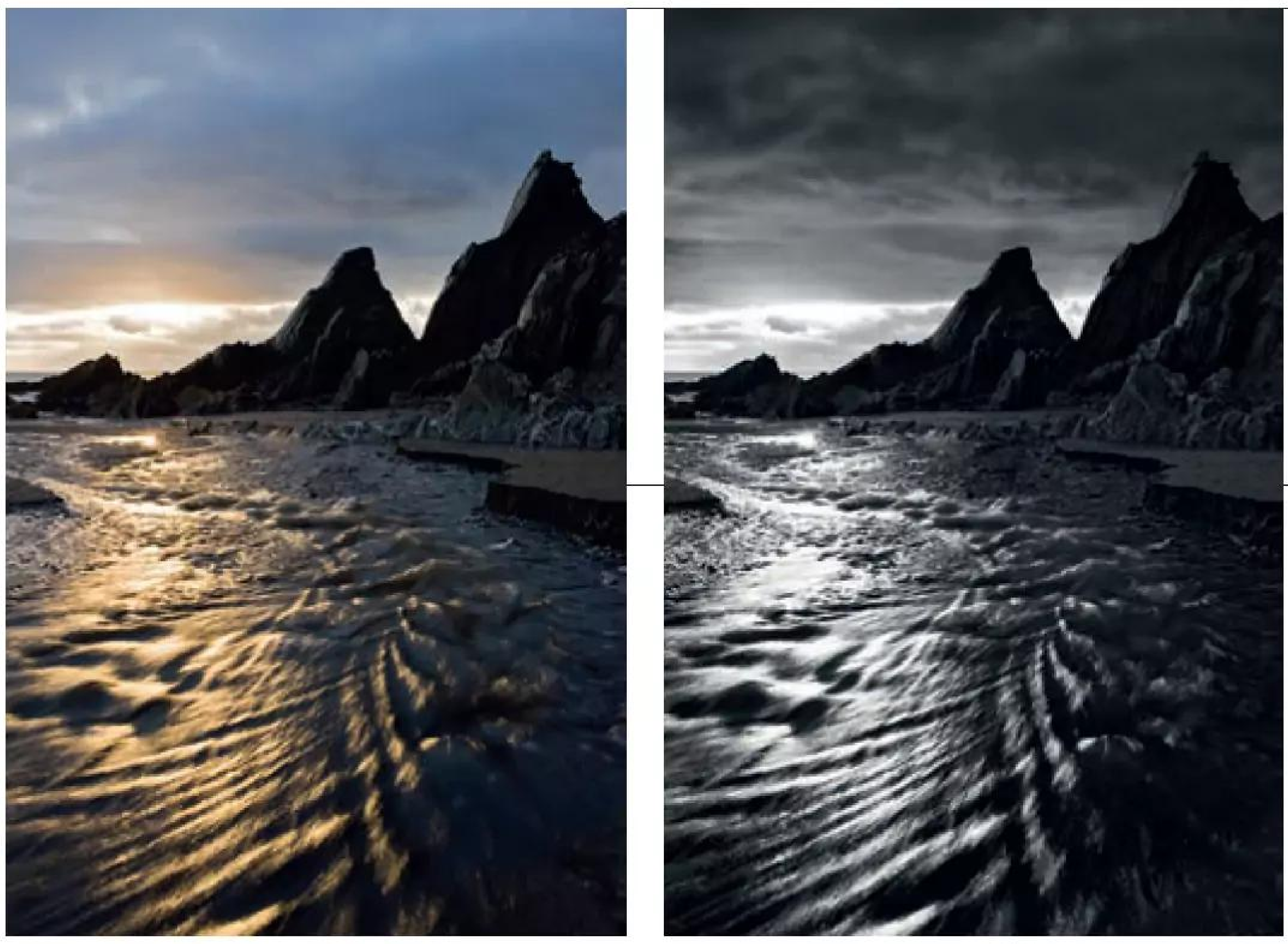
Black & white is not a resting place for uneventful colour imagery. This medium requires light and magic, but many photographers make the classic mistake of simply converting a flat colour image in an attempt to rescue an image for their efforts. It is imperative that the image is studied for its colour content. Conflicting or unharmonious colours can make an image unbalanced, so learn to spot these clashes. Do not fall into a boring black & white trap just because there's simply no light.

2 Don't overdo the plug-ins

I have found that black & white plug-ins can be one of the worst places to process your images. The push-button stylised results can be destructive on image quality. Learn to use subtle approaches, and explore the image's colours through the corresponding black & white sliders.

3 Texture and form

By removing colour from an image, you give the viewer the opportunity to explore texture. Fine details, jagged or smooth, become a sensuous experience when colour is gone. Sometimes this can be an overload, but at other times a delight, especially with rocks, trees and other natural elements.



ALL PICTURES ON THESE PAGES © DAVID CLAPP

4 Experiment… a lot

When reviewing an image, it's a great idea to hit the 'Black and White' option in raw or Photoshop, to see how the image responds. This early step can push the image to success, or indeed double the success when you realise the image works in both monochrome and colour. Making fundamental decisions at an early point can help you understand the power of black & white landscapes.

5 Inky darkroom effects

One fabulous way to get an inky darkroom effect is to use the Colour Balance adjustment layer in Photoshop. This subtle tool gives a cross-processed effect in colour, but also tones black & white images, by adding colour into your shadows, midtones or highlights. Play very carefully with the settings (just +3 or -3 is enough per channel), adding subtle amounts of cyan or blue to the shadows, as well as red and yellow into the highlights.

IN MY KIT BAG I ALWAYS HAVE

Ski goggles

Believe it or not these work brilliantly in the snow! When you get into blizzards they can save your sanity.

STAINLESS STEEL

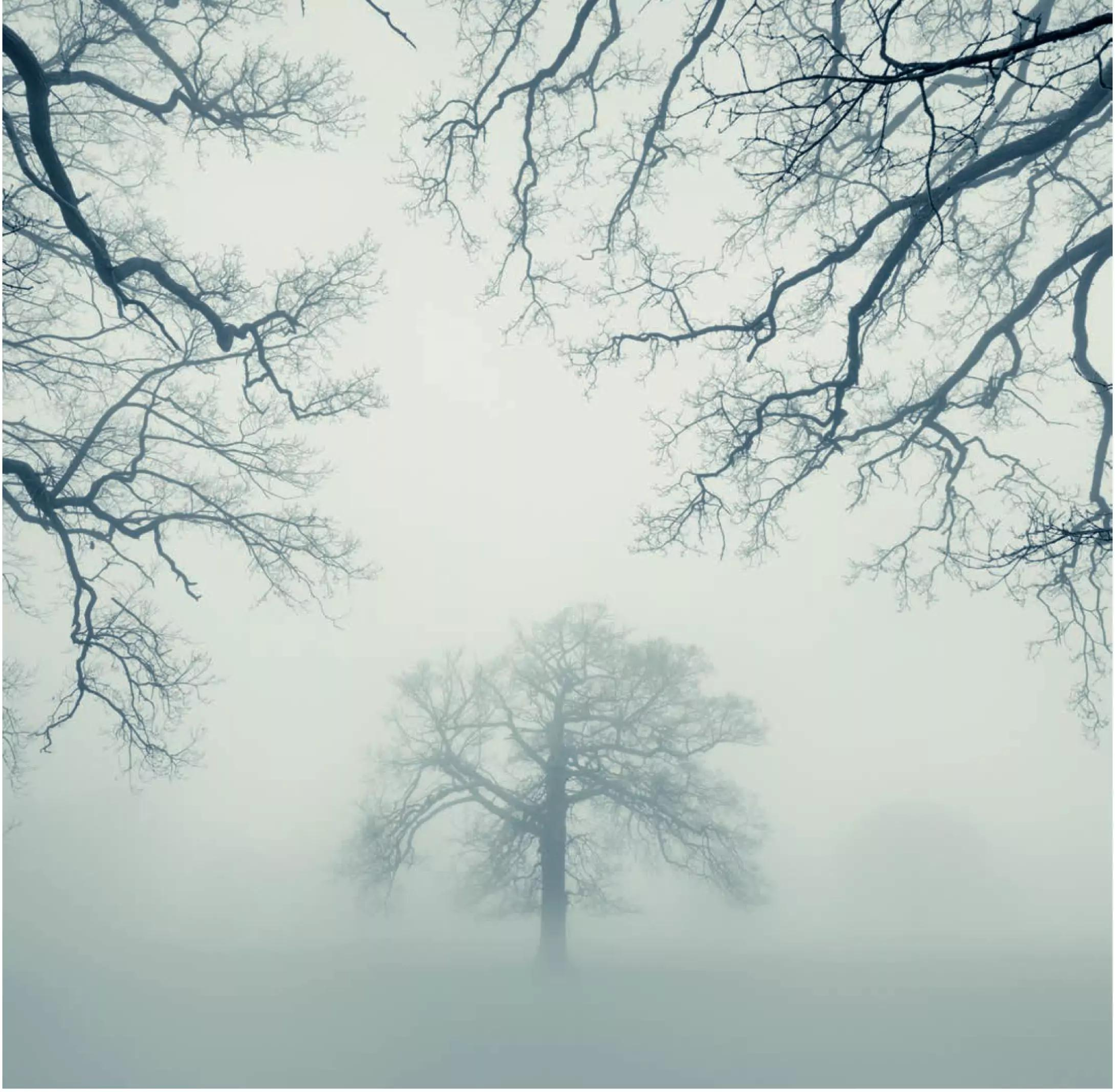
Paint brush

If you get snow in your lenses/camera kit you can literally brush it all out of the buttons and dials with a brush.

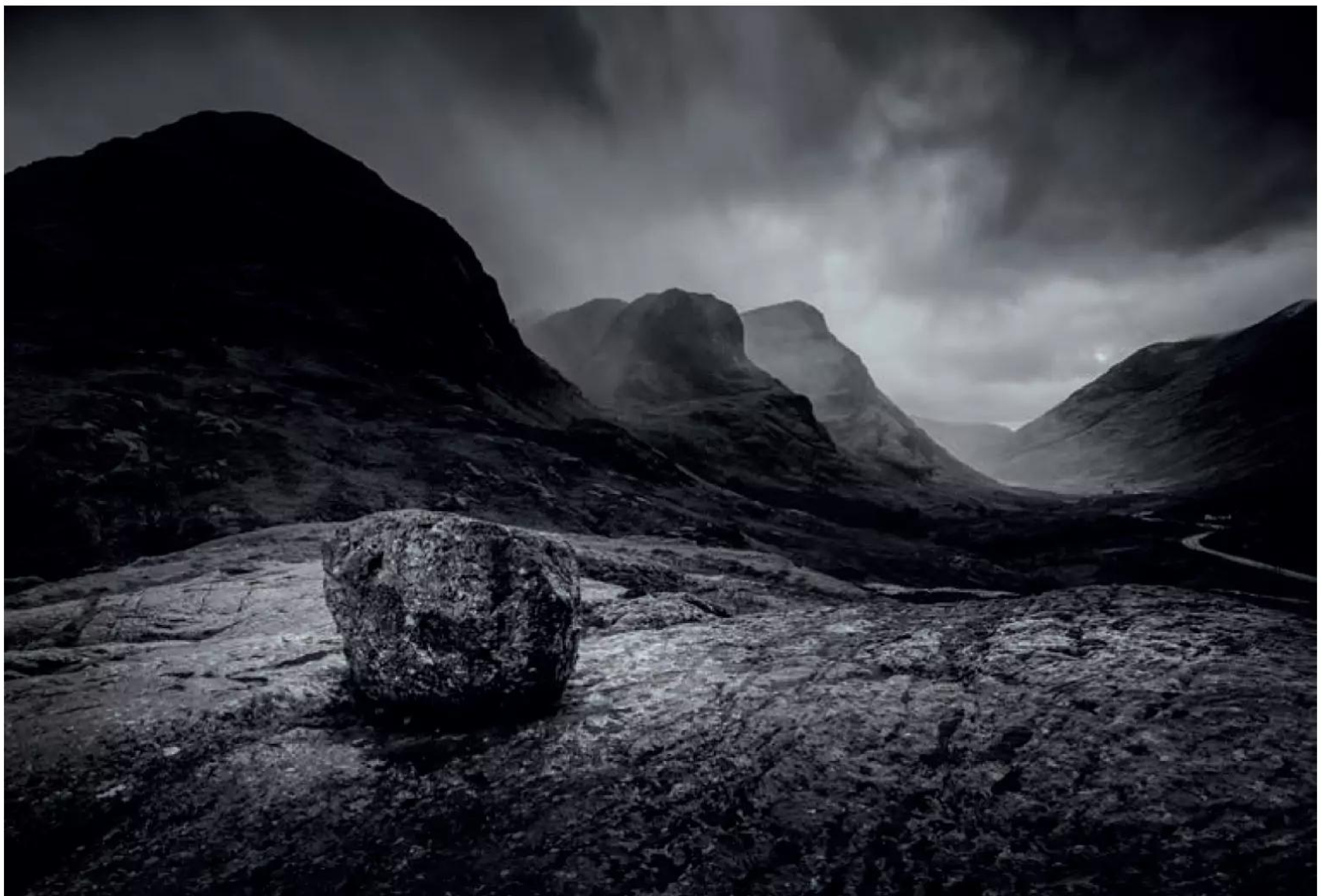
50
HEAVY DUTY REFUSE SACKS
EcoBag
100L
SUPER STRONG

Refuse sack

Always keep a refuse sack in your camera bag to put over your tripod-mounted camera.



Above: Adding a subtle tone to a black & white image can enhance the overall mood
Fujifilm GFX 50S, 23mm, 1/30sec at f/9, ISO 100



Right: Increasing contrast is one way of injecting drama into a scene
Fujifilm GFX 50S, 23mm, 3sec at f/10, ISO 100

Long-exposure problems fixed

Long exposures can be truly sublime, covering a number of techniques and styles. **James Abbott** explains how to avoid common pitfalls in a variety of situations

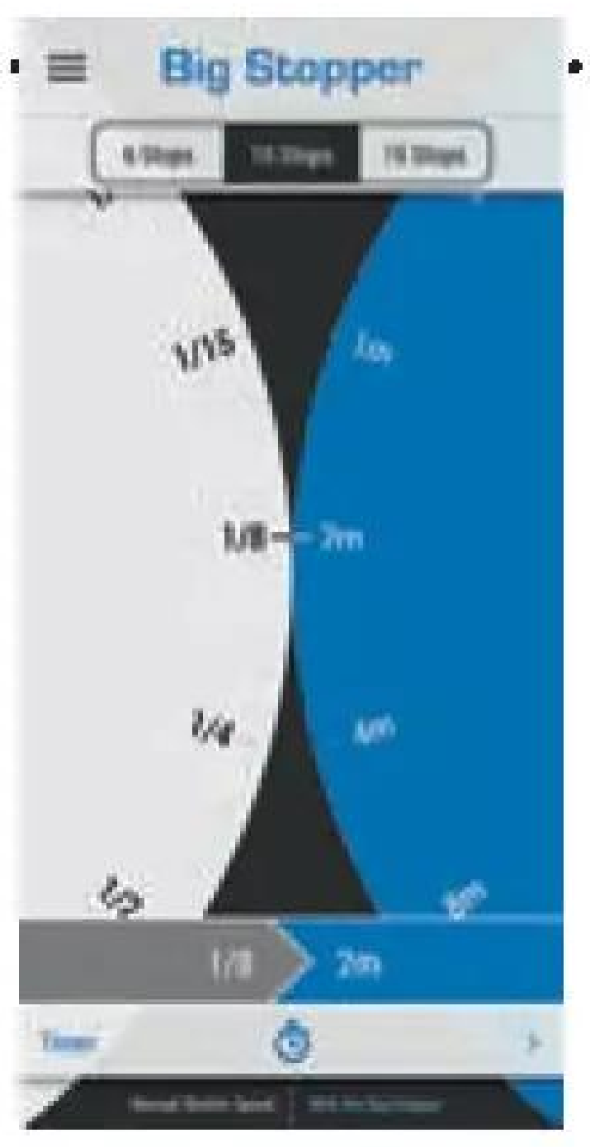
KIT LIST

Shutter remote

If you are shooting exposures longer than 30sec you'll need a shutter remote to hold the shutter open manually in Bulb mode.

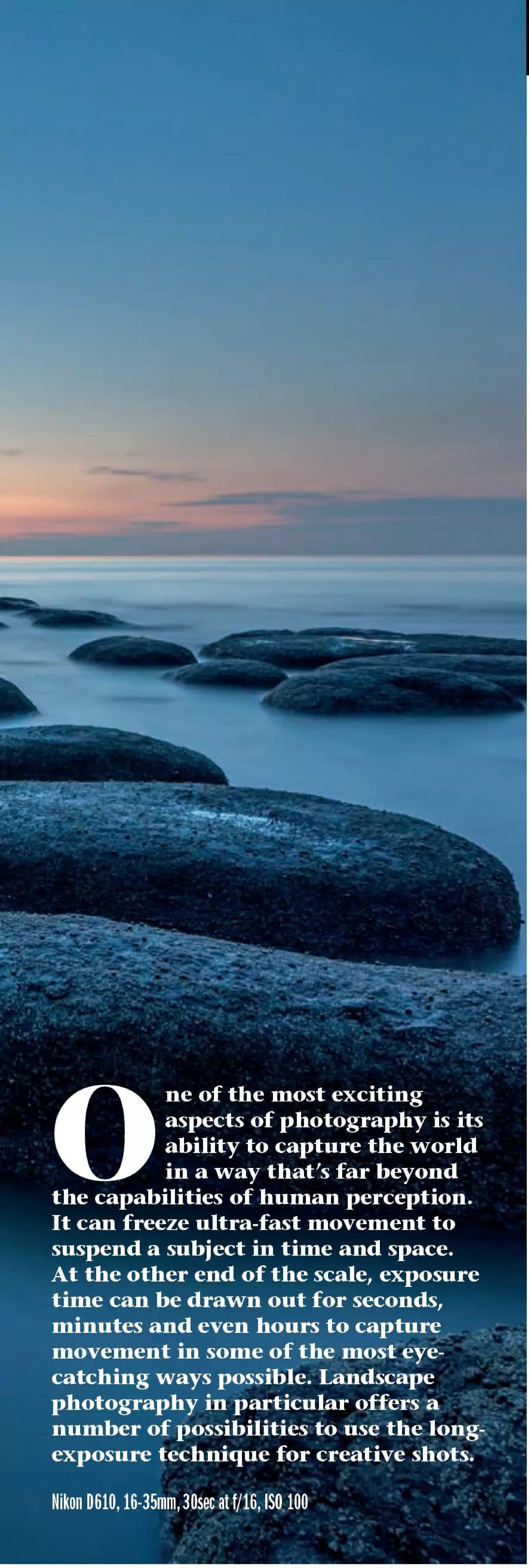
Tripod

Keeping your camera completely still during long exposures is imperative for sharp shots. Never leave home without one.



Exposure calculator

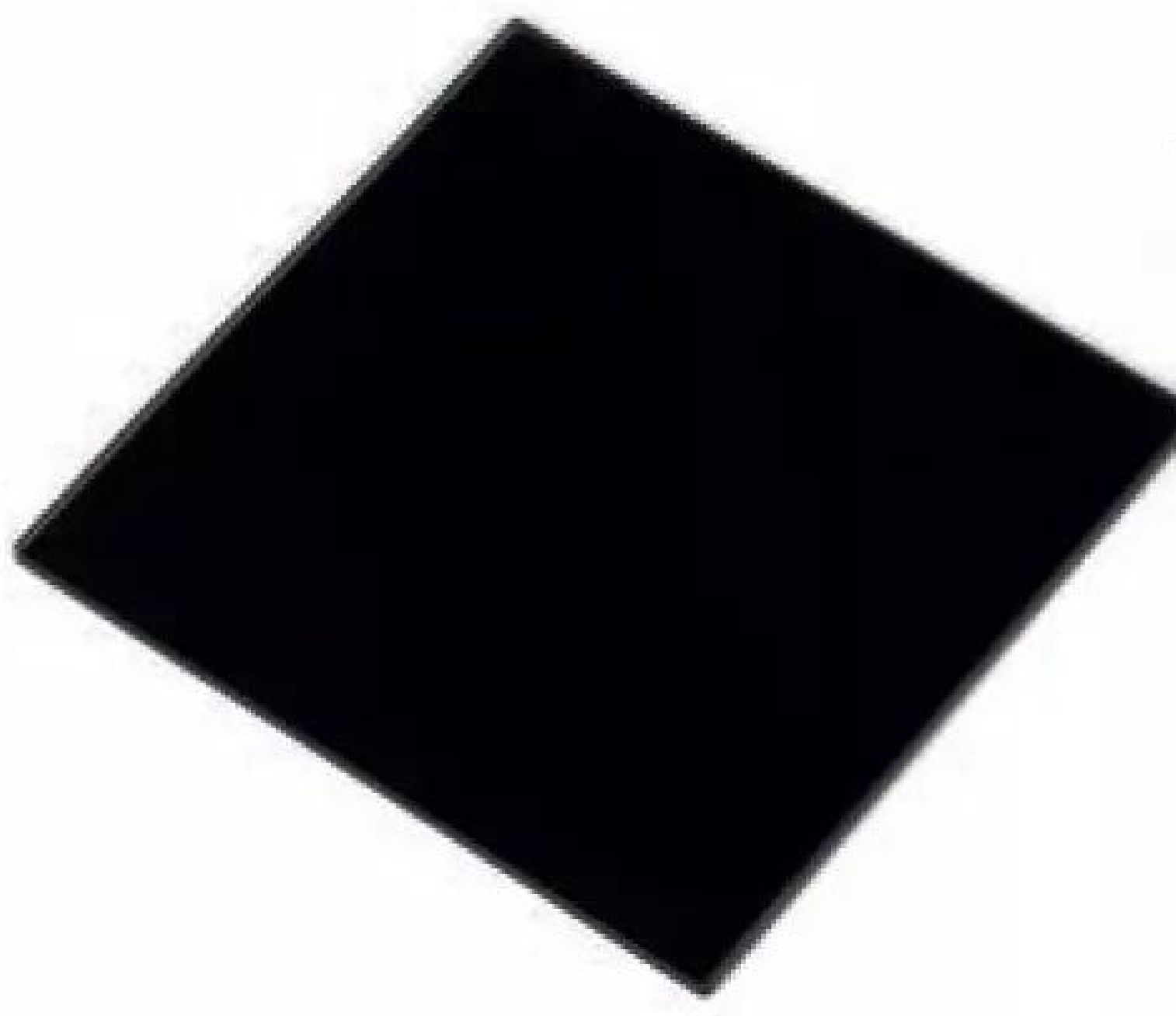
The free Lee Stopper app is a great way of calculating and timing long exposures with 6-, 10- and 15-stop ND filters.



One of the most exciting aspects of photography is its ability to capture the world in a way that's far beyond the capabilities of human perception. It can freeze ultra-fast movement to suspend a subject in time and space. At the other end of the scale, exposure time can be drawn out for seconds, minutes and even hours to capture movement in some of the most eye-catching ways possible. Landscape photography in particular offers a number of possibilities to use the long-exposure technique for creative shots.

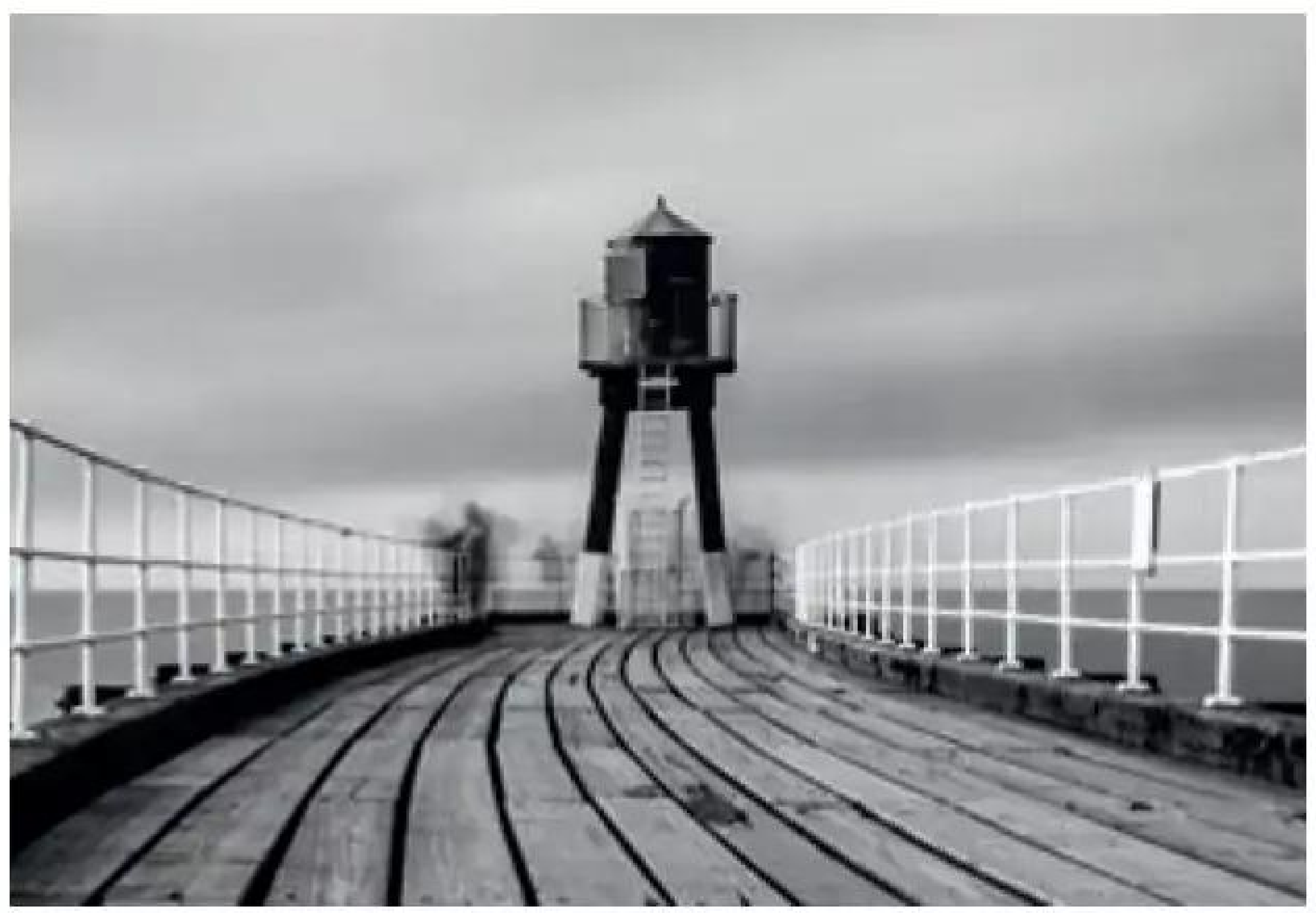
Nikon D610, 16-35mm, 30sec at f/16, ISO 100

© JAMES ABBOTT



◀ **Big stopper**
A long-exposure ND filter that blocks 10 stops of light is a must-have accessory if you would like to be able to shoot ultra-long exposures.

Common landscape problems



© JAMES ABBOTT

© JAMES ABBOTT

Camera shake and ghosting

Camera shake is movement of the camera that's captured in the image and results in blur. It's certainly not the type of blur you're aiming for with the long-exposure technique. This is why it's important to attach your camera to a tripod and use a shutter remote to fire the shutter. Camera shake can also occur if you're shooting on unstable ground and people walk past the camera, which is what happened in the image above.

A second problem in the image above is that stationary as well as slow-moving people have been captured as ghosts despite the long exposure. If people are walking through the scene, they're often not captured, but anyone standing still or moving slowly can be, so timing is everything. To achieve a sharp shot, it was necessary to wait until the scene was free of people and that no one was walking past the camera during the exposure.

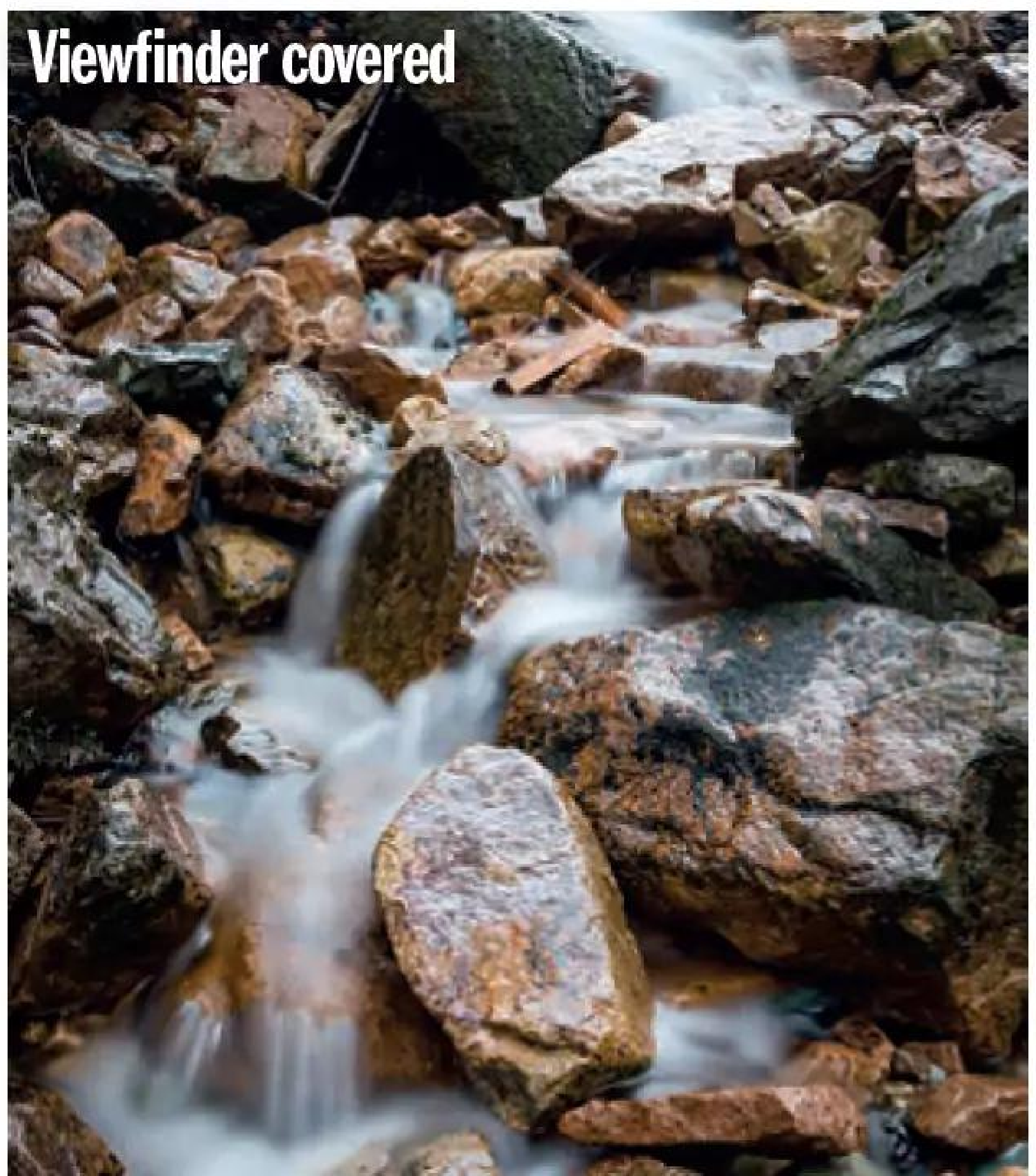
How to shoot minimalist seascapes

Minimalism is a popular approach when shooting long exposures. Attach your camera to your tripod, compose and use any ND grads you would normally need but position the grad in the second, rather than first filter slot. Now manually focus one-third of the distance into the scene and set the aperture to f/11 and ISO 100 in aperture-priority mode. Take a test shot and adjust exposure until everything is correct. Make a note of the shutter speed and set the camera to Bulb mode at f/11 and ISO 100. Slot the long-exposure filter into the first filter slot or screw it on to the lens. Using the Lee Stopper app, select the filter and dial in the shutter speed for a 'normal' exposure; the app will calculate exposure. Then click on the timer to time the exposure. Press start and release the shutter at the same time, locking the shutter button on the remote until the timer comes to an end.

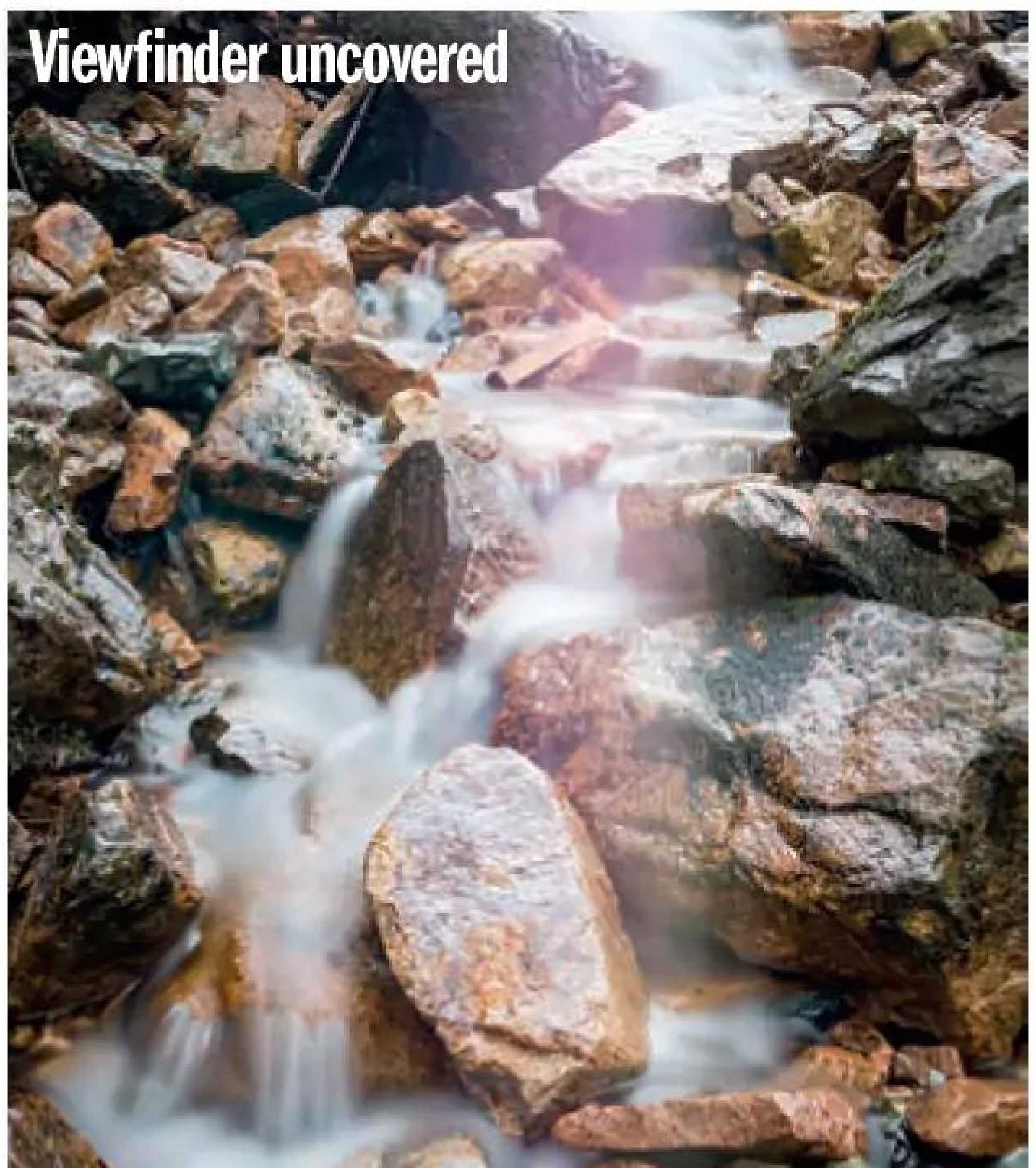
Problems using Big Stoppers with landscape shots

The easiest mistake to make when shooting with a long-exposure filter such as the Big Stopper during the day is not to put a cover over your viewfinder. Some professional DSLRs have a viewfinder curtain built-in, so you simply have to flick a switch to engage it. And if you're shooting with a mirrorless camera with an electronic viewfinder, you don't need to worry about this – no light can reach the sensor through the EVF. If you forget your viewfinder cover, use a lens cloth to stop light entering.

So why is it so important not to let light enter the viewfinder during daytime long exposures? It's because when enough light enters the viewfinder, it finds its way to the sensor, and over the course of the exposure creates a light leak in the image – reminiscent of light leaks you'd get as a result of damaged film canisters.



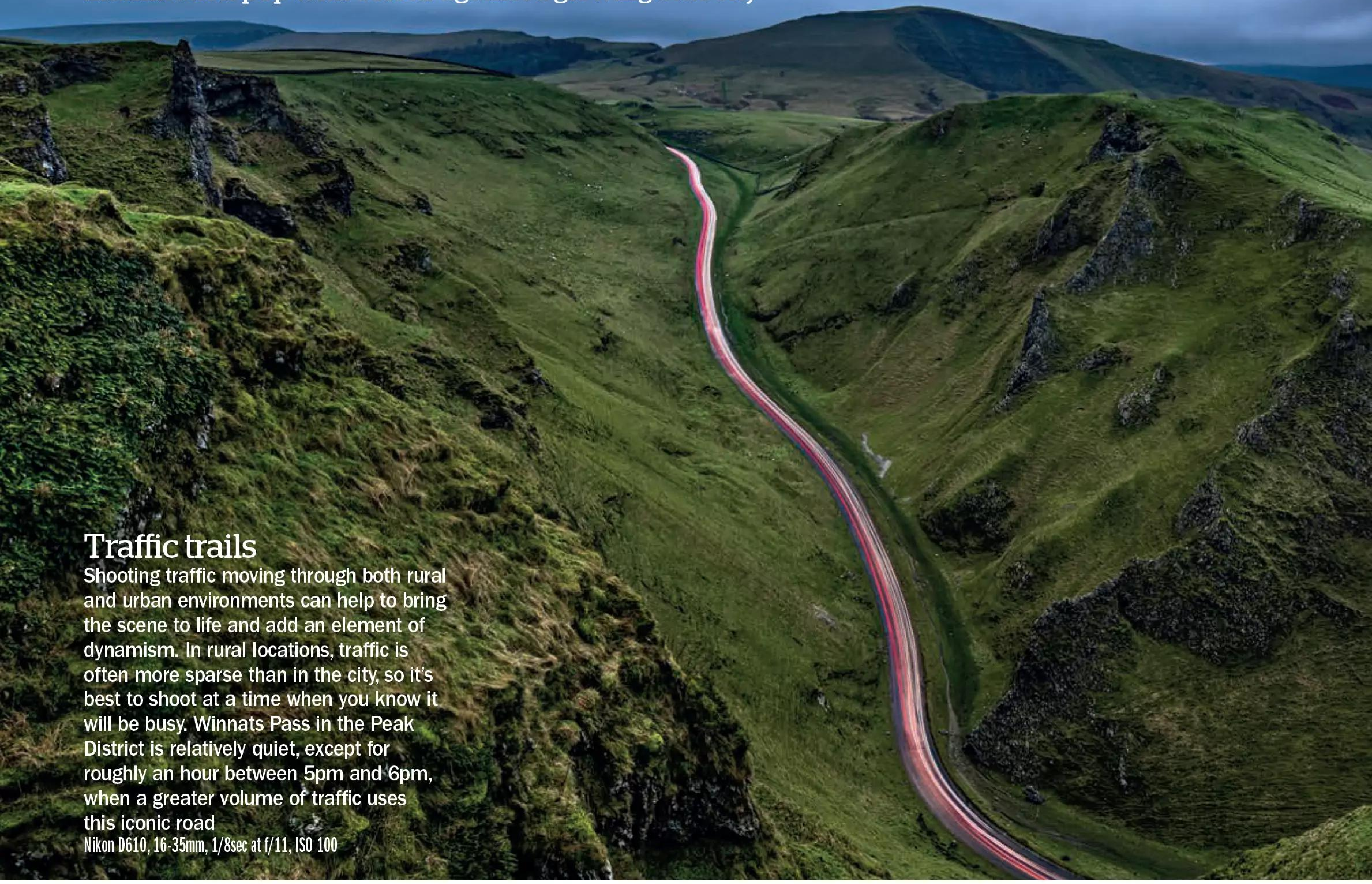
© JAMES ABBOTT



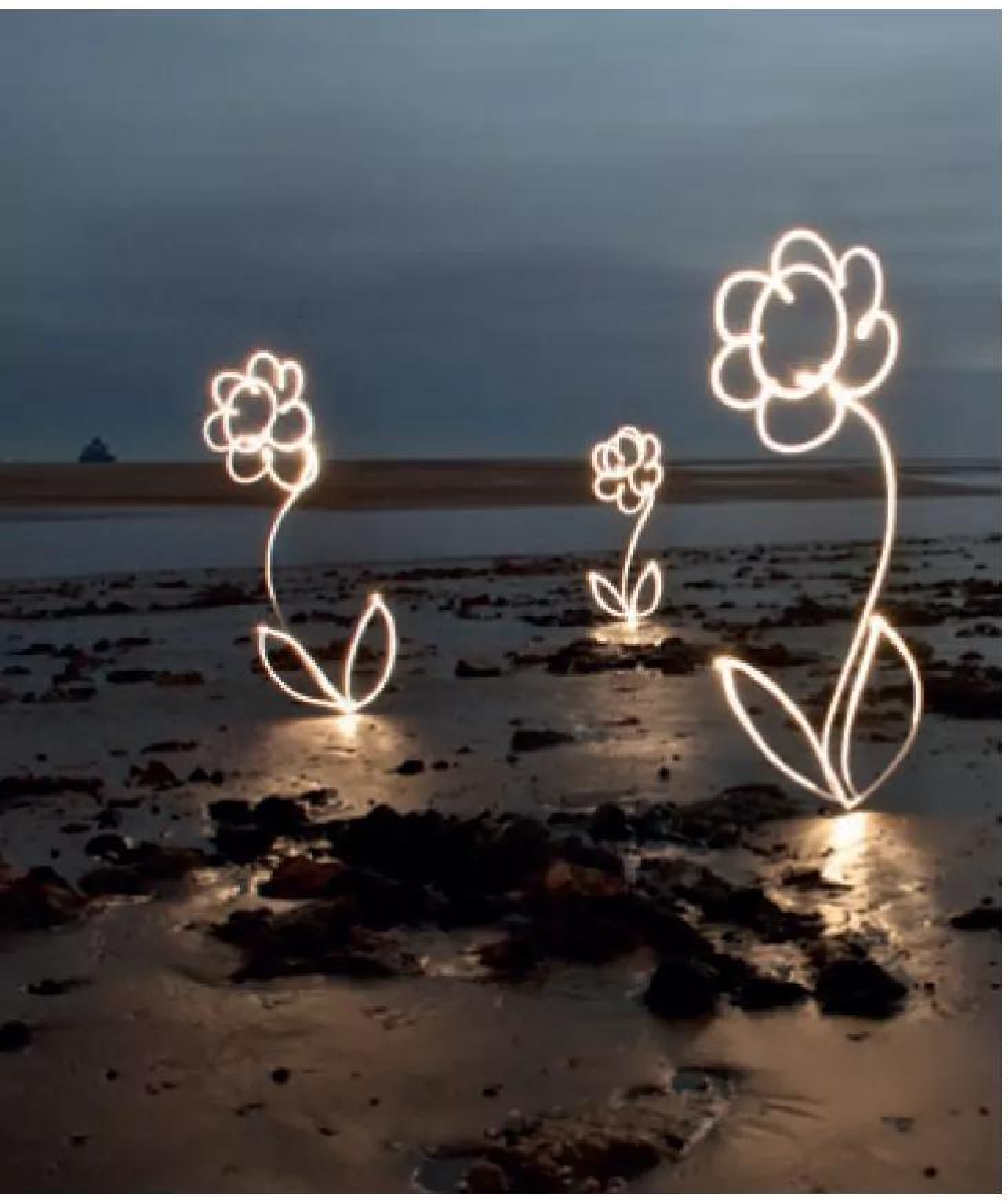
© JAMES ABBOTT

Capture dynamic light trails

When the sun drops below the horizon, a new photographic world opens up – one where light and movement can be used to make artificial illumination pop with colour against a glowing blue sky



Traffic trails
Shooting traffic moving through both rural and urban environments can help to bring the scene to life and add an element of dynamism. In rural locations, traffic is often more sparse than in the city, so it's best to shoot at a time when you know it will be busy. Winnats Pass in the Peak District is relatively quiet, except for roughly an hour between 5pm and 6pm, when a greater volume of traffic uses this iconic road
Nikon D610, 16-35mm, 1/8sec at f/11, ISO 100



Remember to move quickly as you have only a 20-second self-timed exposure in which to work

© GETTY IMAGES/JULIAN MARSHALL

Create light trails anywhere

Painting with light is a technique that can be used to create eye-catching images of light trails, anywhere. Indoors or outdoors, as long as ambient light levels are low enough, you can draw simple images, illuminate a subject or even write words. It's a lot of fun and despite being one of those techniques that looks difficult, it's actually really easy.

Once you've identified a suitable backdrop, make sure you're on location just after sunset. Similar to traffic trails, a blue glow in the sky always looks best. Shoot in aperture priority at f/8 and ISO 100, and then wait until exposure time is at least 20sec. Use the self-timer set to a 20-sec delay to allow you to get into position, and if painting multiple areas/objects, turn the torch off between each. And work fast!

TIMING IS EVERYTHING

Good timing

© GETTY IMAGES/HISHAM IBRAHIM

Fairgrounds are much easier to shoot than traffic trails because the rides move quickly and uniformly; plus, their bright lights blur together in stunning ways. The most difficult issue is finding a spot where people won't knock your tripod.

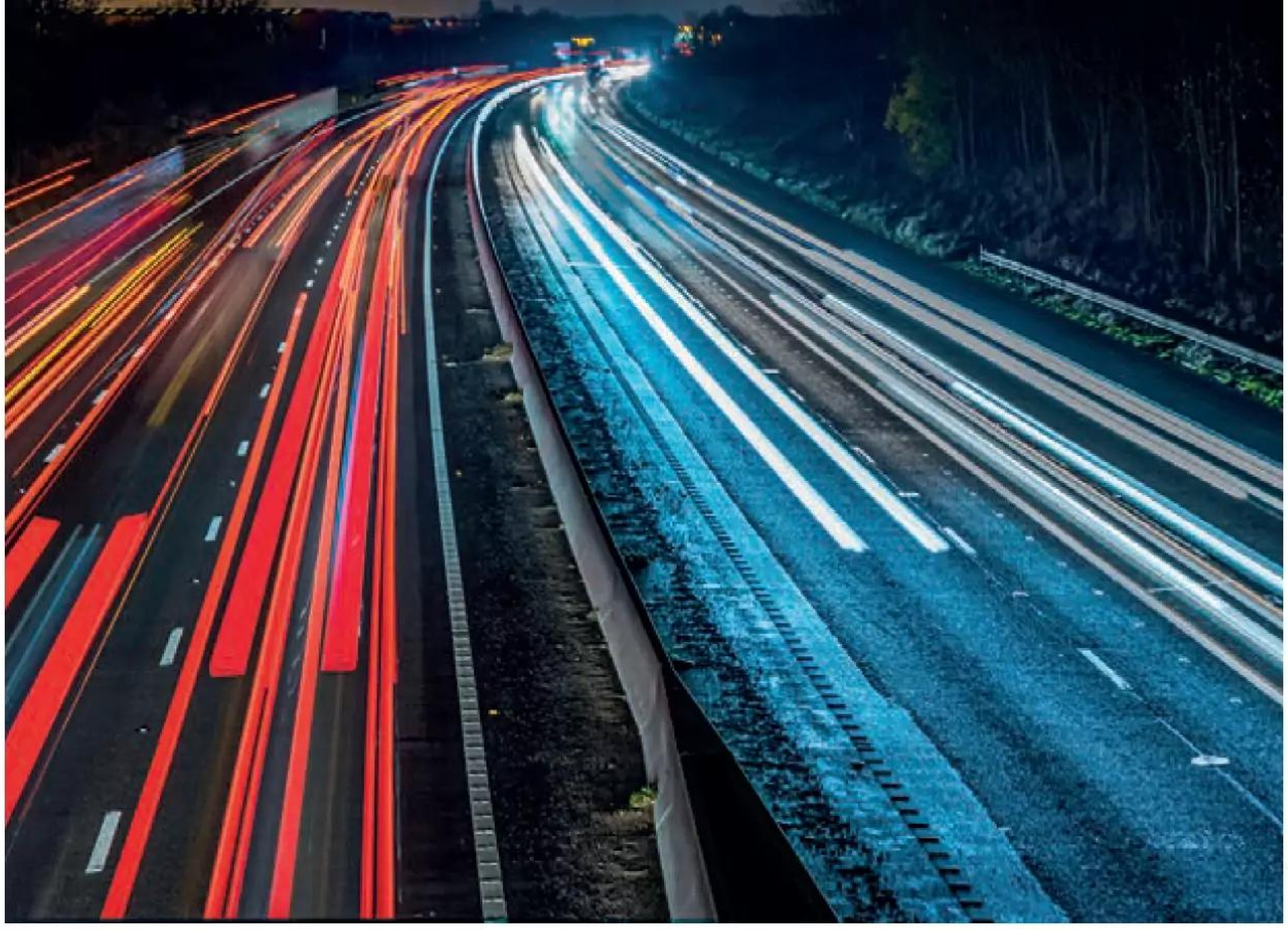
As with all long exposures, a tripod is essential, and a shutter remote preferable, although the camera self-timer works perfectly. For this type of subject,

© JAMES ABBOTT

Bad timing

© GETTY IMAGES/HISHAM IBRAHIM

focusing on the dominant ride in the frame works well, and shoot in aperture priority at f/8 and ISO 100. To take advantage of the lights, you'll obviously need to shoot in the evening, and with each ride lasting a few minutes, there will be plenty of time to fire off a few frames. Exposures will naturally fall within the region of 10-30sec, which is perfect. But wait until the ride is in full motion before firing the shutter.



© GETTY IMAGES/EYEEM

How to shoot light trails

Time of day

The best time of the day to shoot light trails, be they traffic trails or at the fairground, is the period of time after sunset. For around 30-45min the sky will glow blue. This results in much more punchy images than at night when the sky is completely black. When light levels drop too low, the surrounding environment can also become too dark and lack interest and detail.

Camera settings

Regular landscape settings apply, so shoot in aperture priority mode at f/11 with ISO set to 100. In this mode, the camera will take care of the shutter speed for you, and when shooting after sunset this will generally range from 15-30sec. As a general rule, 15sec is the shortest exposure time you can get great traffic trails with, but this of course depends on the density of traffic or the speed of the fairground ride you're shooting. If shutter speed needs to be longer than 30sec, for a correct exposure increase ISO to 200-400.

Camera kit

Shooting light trails requires no specialist kit – just a camera and kit lens will do the job; although, if you have an ultra wideangle lens, this can also work very well. You'll need a tripod to keep the camera steady during long exposures, and if you have one, a shutter remote can be useful. But if you don't have one no need to worry – simply use the camera self-timer set to a 5-sec delay to release the shutter and avoid camera shake.

Location

For traffic trails, an elevated position such as a bridge over a busy road or motorway provides an excellent viewpoint. To capture the less bright rear lights, position yourself above the lane of traffic moving away from you. Another great spot can be shooting on a traffic island with the traffic travelling on either side of you, for a more immersive-looking result.

Traffic density

The volume of traffic on the chosen road is always an important factor, which is why shooting near main roads at busy periods will give you the best results. Quiet roads with little traffic will most likely always be a greater source of frustration.

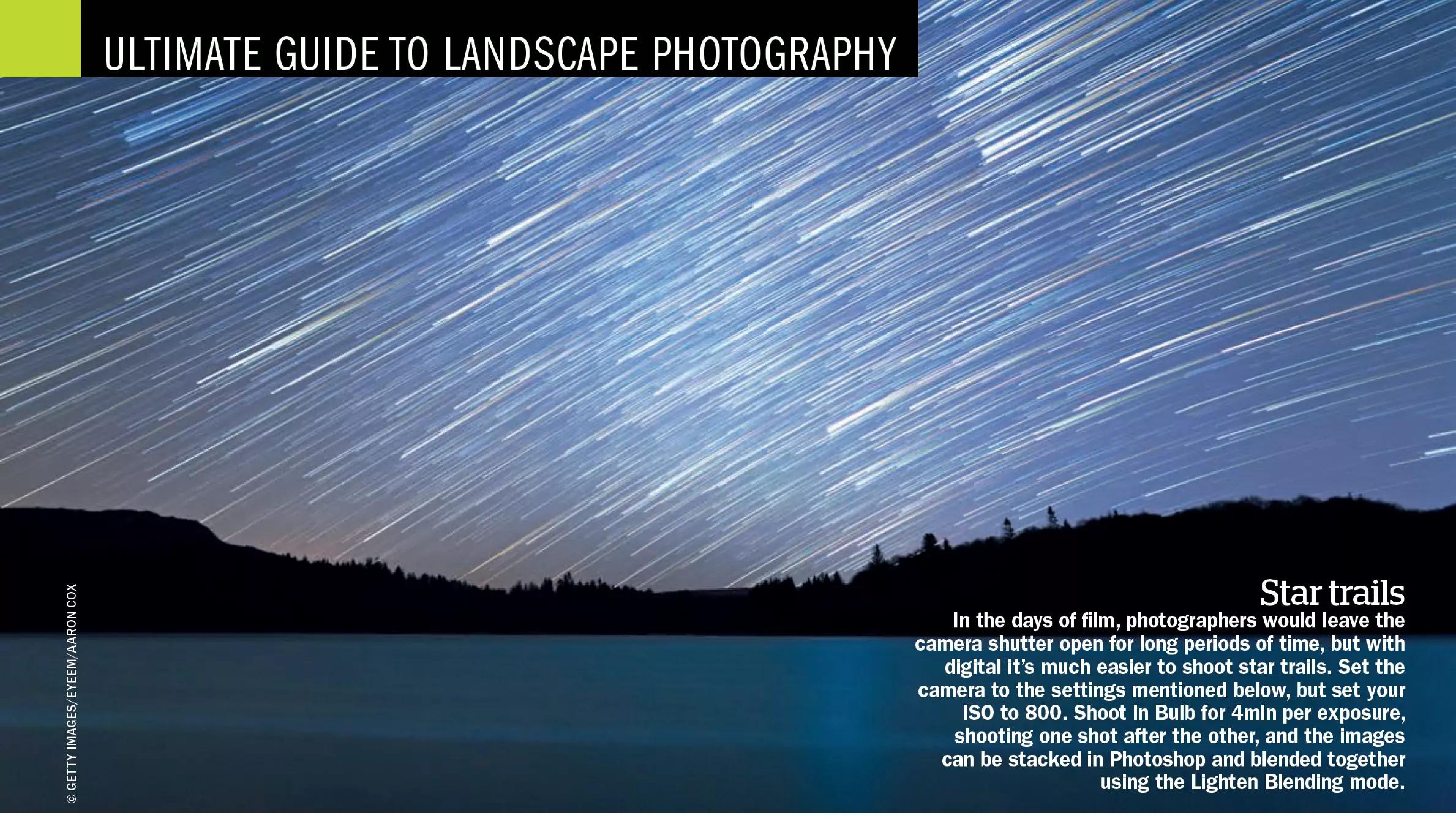
Common problems

Very dark sky

The ideal time to shoot light trails is for the short period of time after sunset known as the 'blue hour'. Be on location and ready to shoot before sunset, because the blue hour isn't really an hour. Shooting at this time will provide a bright blue glowing sky with light trails in the foreground rather than a boring black sky.

Incomplete light trails

When shooting light trails, you have to wait for busy periods when traffic is flowing on both sides of the road. If you shoot from an elevated position, such as a bridge, you'll be able to see the density of traffic in the distance and can release the shutter at the best time. Also shoot at rush hour if possible.



© GETTY IMAGES/EYEEM/AARON COX

Star trails

In the days of film, photographers would leave the camera shutter open for long periods of time, but with digital it's much easier to shoot star trails. Set the camera to the settings mentioned below, but set your ISO to 800. Shoot in Bulb for 4min per exposure, shooting one shot after the other, and the images can be stacked in Photoshop and blended together using the Lighten Blending mode.

Shooting stars

THE NIGHT sky has been the object of fascination for many a millennia. Astrophotography is an extremely captivating arm of the landscape photography genre. For pure astrophotography, one might use a star-tracker device or telescope capable of mounting a camera, but it doesn't have to be that complicated.

Digital photography and the control of high-ISO noise, alongside the advances in fast maximum aperture, wideangle lenses, have made photographing the stars more achievable than ever before. You'll get the best results using professional-level cameras and lenses, although it's still possible to capture fantastic images with more modest kit.

Use a wideangle lens for astrophotography

© GETTY IMAGES/NICK FITZHARDINGE

Common problems

© GETTY IMAGES/KRISTJANFREYR

Choose a location far away from cities to avoid capturing light pollution

Light pollution

Not only will light pollution make it more difficult to actually see and capture stars, it will also create an orange glow in your images. Shoot in dark sky areas, such as Northumberland and the Brecon Beacons in Wales, for the best results possible.

Turn off Noise Reduction

Turn off your camera's high ISO and long-exposure Noise Reduction. It's always best to deal with these in post-processing, and having them turned on will make the camera take ages to write images to the memory card.

Shallow depth-of-field

Shooting at a wide aperture means foreground depth of field will be extremely shallow. To avoid this, take a wide open shot of the sky, and one stopped down for the ground to blend together in post-processing.

Basic set-up for stars

Lens choice

The best lenses for astrophotography are ultra-wideangles, so 16-35mm on full-frame and 10-15mm on APS-C. Wideangle primes also work exceptionally well, and the wider the aperture the lower the ISO can be set to. For best results, use f/1.4, f/1.8 and f/2.8, but f/4 lenses can achieve reasonable results as well.

Focus and shooting mode

Set the lens to infinity, which will focus the lens on the sky. Shoot in manual mode, and to capture stars as the eye sees them aim for a shutter speed of around 20-25sec. There's much more to shutter speed and focal length than this – the '500 rule' – but this is a good general starting point.

Camera settings

Record images in raw and set the widest aperture your lens is capable of. Now set ISO to 1600 and increase or decrease as necessary using the image on the LCD as a guide. For this technique the histogram is useless because it will show massive underexposure.

Set your camera to its widest aperture when shooting stars
Canon EOS 5D Mark III, 16-35mm, 30sec at f/2.8, ISO 3200

© GETTY IMAGES/DONG WENJIE

Urban beauty

Approach urban scenes with a fresh perspective. Our experts share their vision and top tips for capturing the charm in apparently mundane spaces

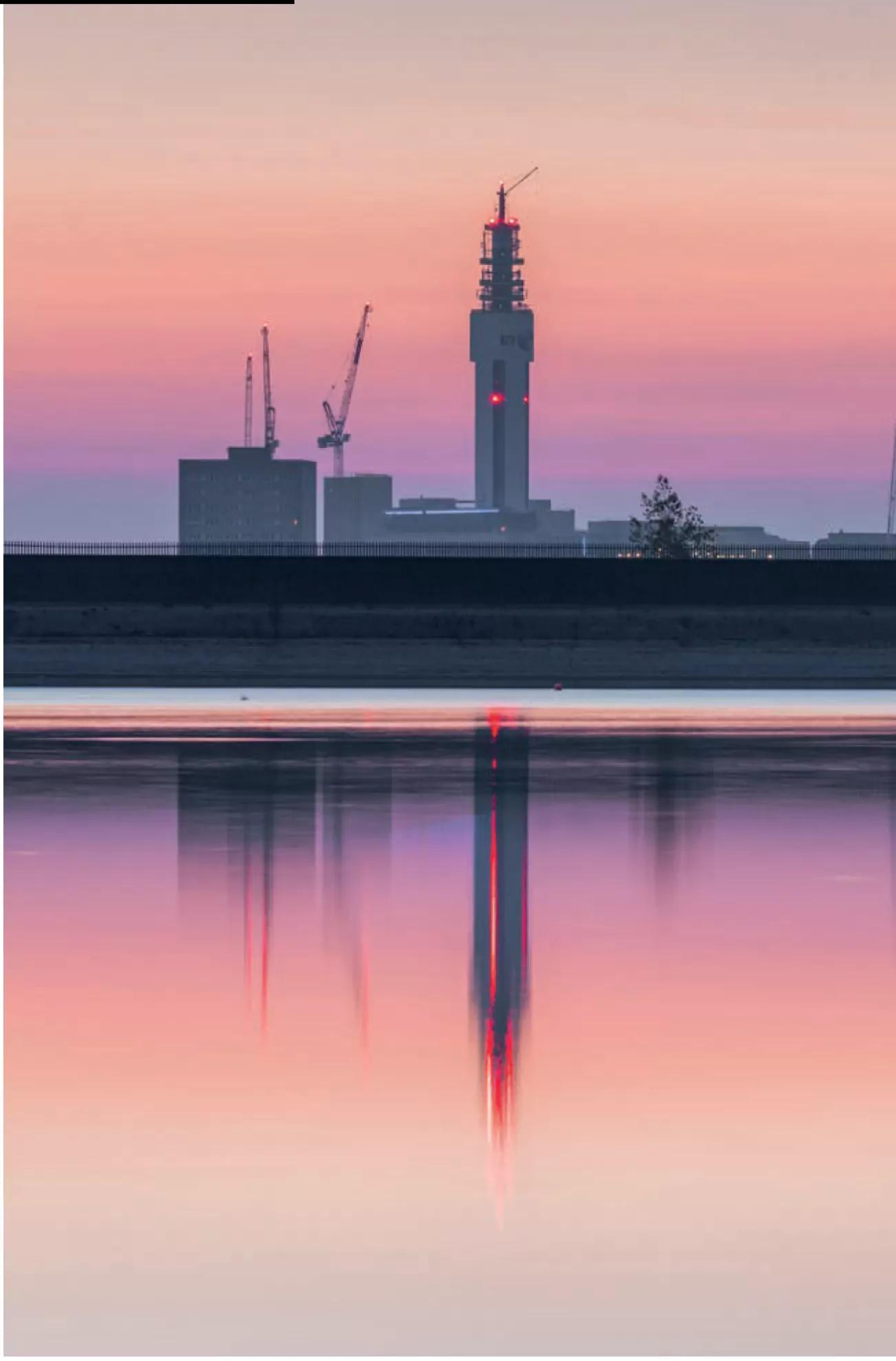
Verity Milligan
Verity is a professional urban/landscape photographer based in Birmingham. She has worked on campaigns for organisations such as Yorkshire Tea and Visit Britain. She's happiest when outdoors at dawn.
Visit **www.veritymilliganphotography.com**

I tend to approach urban photography from a similar perspective as I would landscape photography. Based in the city of Birmingham, I'm surrounded by sprawling, urban scenery that is in constant evolution. You might associate shooting in a city centre with street photography, but I enjoy the challenge of finding beauty in the architecture and showing off unique features of the space.

Often, I explore the city in the early morning, so I capture the colour of dawn in addition to the low light that follows. The city tends to be quieter during this time of day, so I can concentrate on capturing the architecture. Cities provide ample opportunity to explore the architecture in different ways. Most obvious is capturing the grand vistas that urban centres tend to include, either at ground level (perhaps reflected in an inner-city waterway or reservoir) or from an array of different rooftops.

Birmingham, like many other cities in the UK, has a mix of modern and historic buildings standing in juxtaposition to each other, and I enjoy capturing both in the same frame, contextualised by the surrounding space or through a more abstract approach where I can document a detailed facet of a particular building.

ALL PICTURES ON THESE PAGES © VERITY E. MILLIGAN



▼Invest in some filters

As with landscape photography, a good set of filters enables you to make the most of light while maintaining detail in the foreground. Using a 10-stop filter will allow you to create compelling long exposures, and a circular polariser can reduce reflection and glare when capturing architecture/inner-city waterways.

Reflections

Many urban spaces have waterways such as canals or reservoirs based in or near the city. This can provide ample opportunity to capture unique cityscapes, especially during dawn when the water is often still and reflective. If there is a lack of inner-city waterways, puddles can be just as useful.

▲ Get a good tripod

Photography in urban spaces is all about showcasing the story of the architecture at various points in the day, at different times of the year. If you're shooting at sunrise, sunset or at night time, a sturdy tripod is a must as it will allow you to capture detail in low light and ensure your final image is sharp throughout.

▼ Composition is key

Moving the position of your camera can influence the mood and feeling of an image. Shooting from a low angle can increase the impact of architecture, and if you shoot from a high perspective (such as a rooftop) this provides an opportunity to 'look down' on the buildings.

▲ Shoot at night

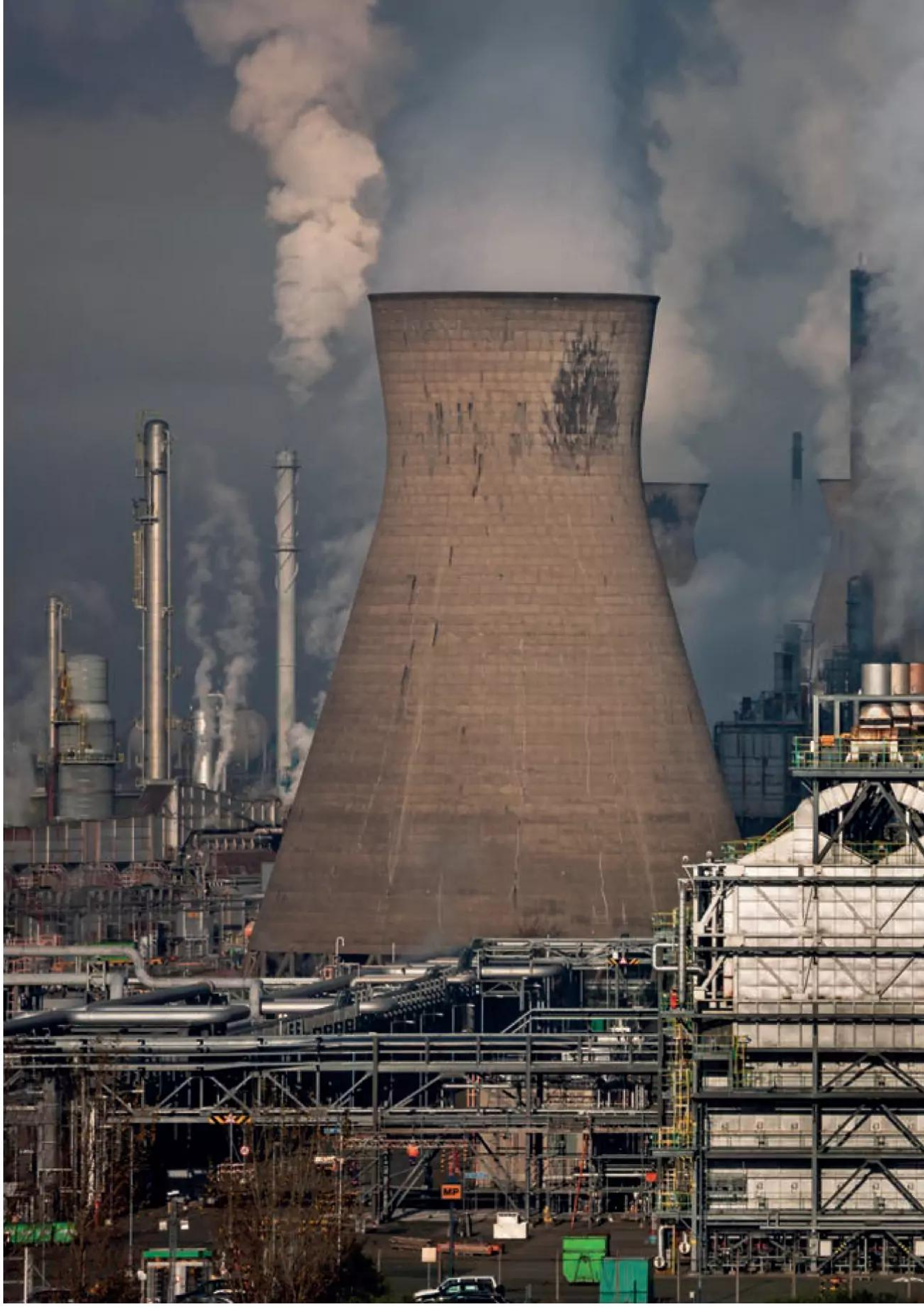
Cities take on a different atmosphere at night, especially during dusk when the lights come on. This can be a good time to capture the city, as commuters will be heading home, providing plenty of opportunities for long exposures of light trails and evoking a sense of movement and life to your imagery.

Simon Butterworth

Simon Butterworth is a landscape, architecture and documentary photographer based in Scotland. His work has been featured in many publications and galleries around the world. To see more of his work, visit **www.simonbutterworthphotography.com**

Urban photography is about exploration, not just physical spaces but also exploring the photographic possibilities of mundane and seemingly ordinary locations. An open mind is essential; leave preconceptions behind and follow your instincts about what constitutes a good photograph. Be constantly on the lookout for potential photography opportunities whether it's in books, on TV or looking out of train windows. I keep a whiteboard on my office wall with a long list of possible photographic locations, which I constantly update.

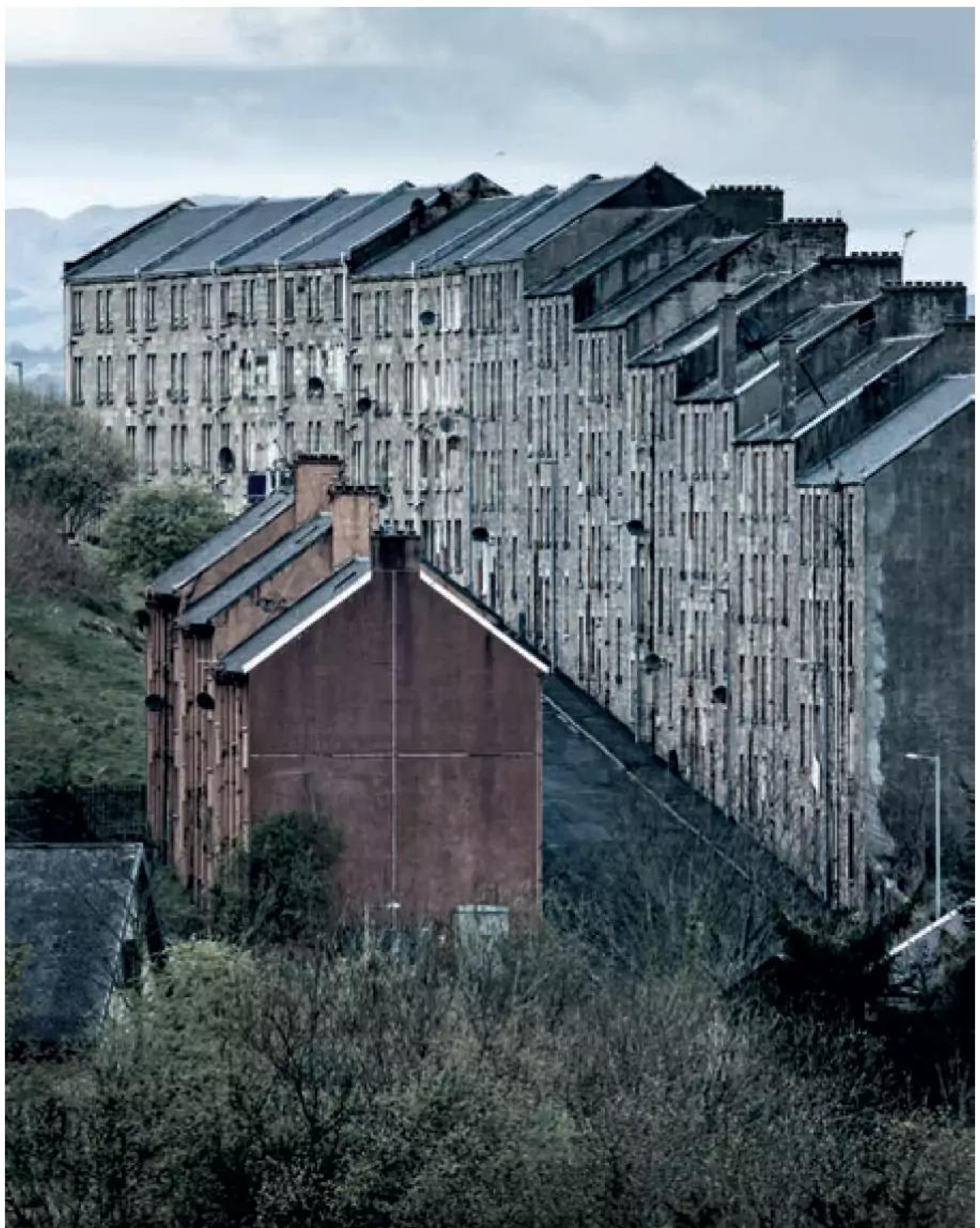
A good range of lenses is important. Many industrial locations are out of bounds owing to security reasons, so detailed maps and a long lens are essential. I often use a drone in situations where it's legal to do so. Just being able to get 15 or 20 feet above the ground can make a huge difference when obstacles are spoiling a clear shot. I have even been known to hire an airplane when the situation demands it. Clothes are also an important part of my kit; I like to blend in with the crowd when out and about. A bright yellow jacket isn't a good idea when you want to nip through a gap in the wall to check out an interesting scrapyard. Footwear choices can make or break your expedition as well – you need robust, comfortable shoes and a pair of decent wellies to cover all eventualities.

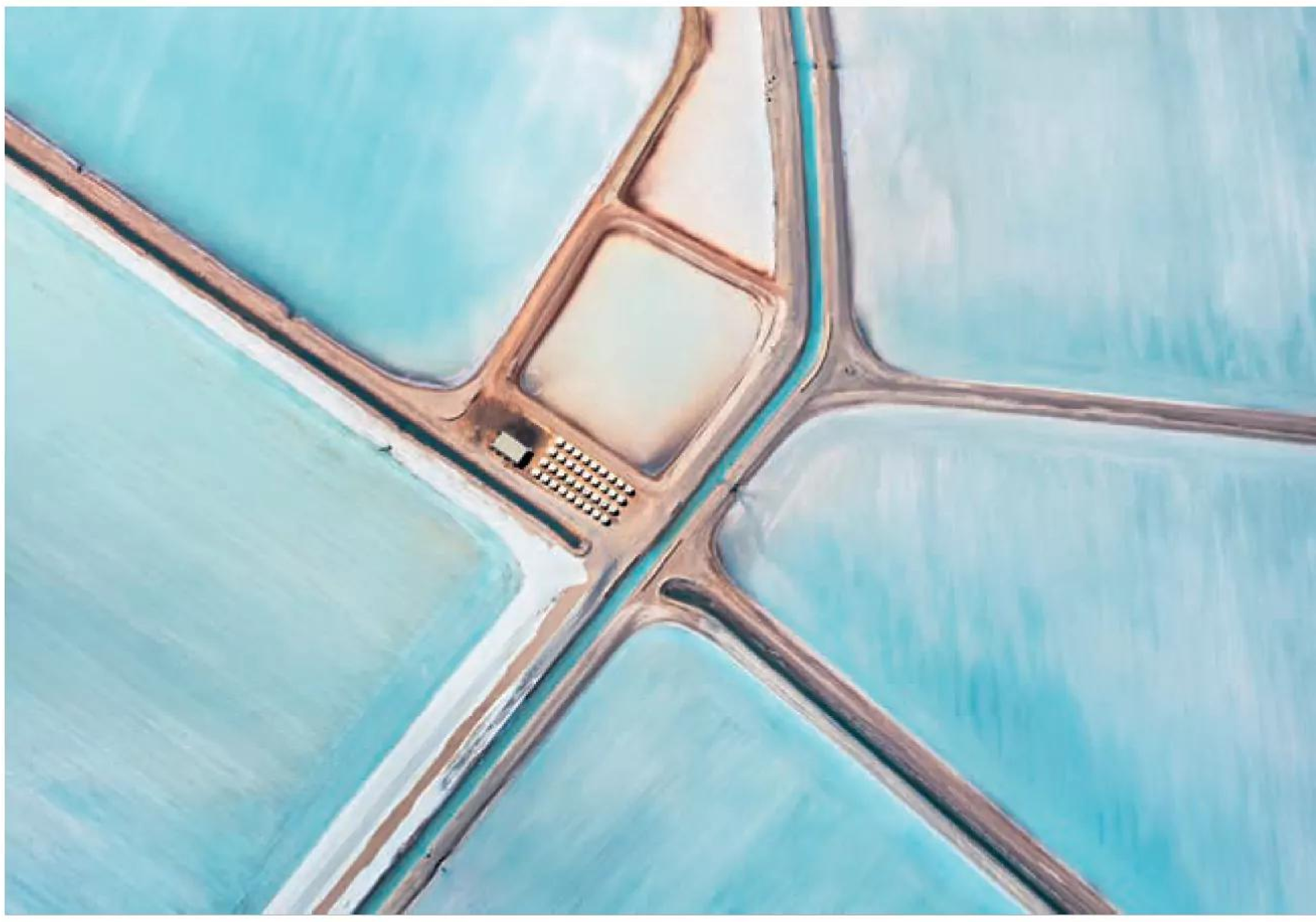


ALL PICTURES ON THESE PAGES © SIMON BUTTERWORTH

▼ Choose your lens

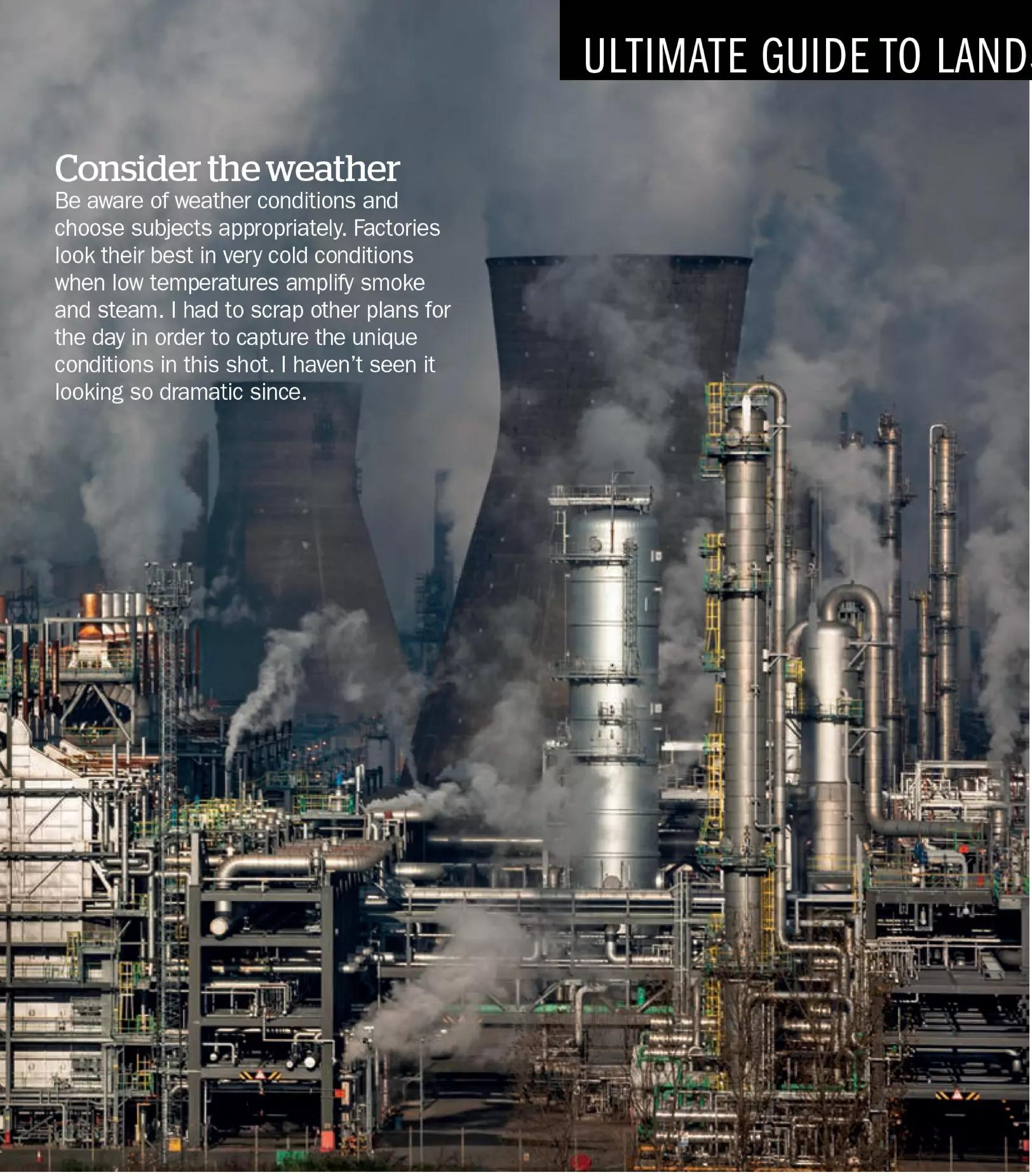
My LPOTY winning shot of Port Glasgow was taken from about a mile away with a 400mm lens. I could have got closer, but it was the compression effect that I wanted. Think about lens choice and why you are using it; don't pick one just because it saves you having to walk a few hundred metres.





▲ Ignore the rules

This shot from a series on industrial salt production in Western Australia was taken from a light airplane, which had the rear doors removed. It was caught in blinding midday light, which is against every rule of traditional landscape photography. By not following the conventions I made an original and successful image.

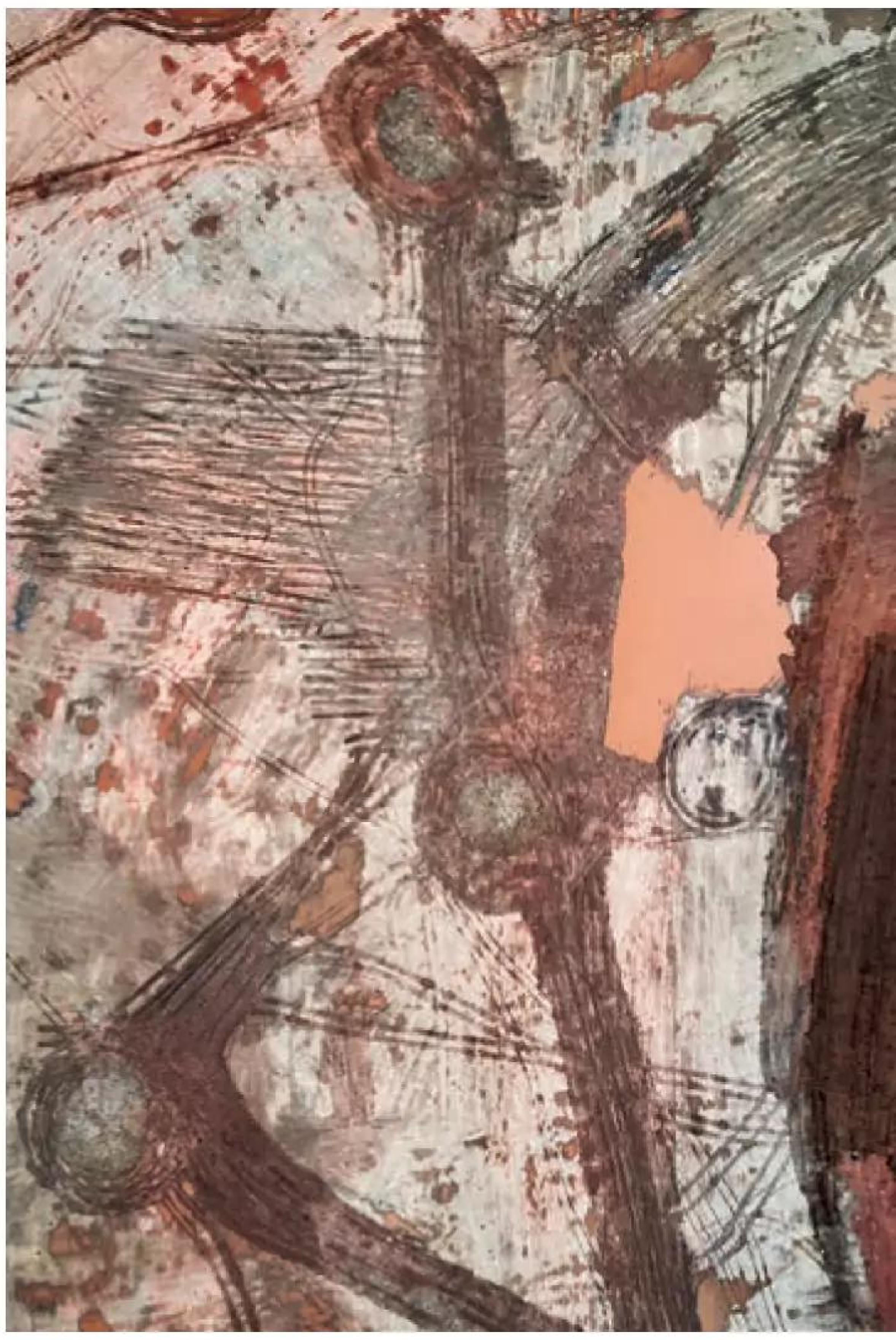


Consider the weather

Be aware of weather conditions and choose subjects appropriately. Factories look their best in very cold conditions when low temperatures amplify smoke and steam. I had to scrap other plans for the day in order to capture the unique conditions in this shot. I haven't seen it looking so dramatic since.

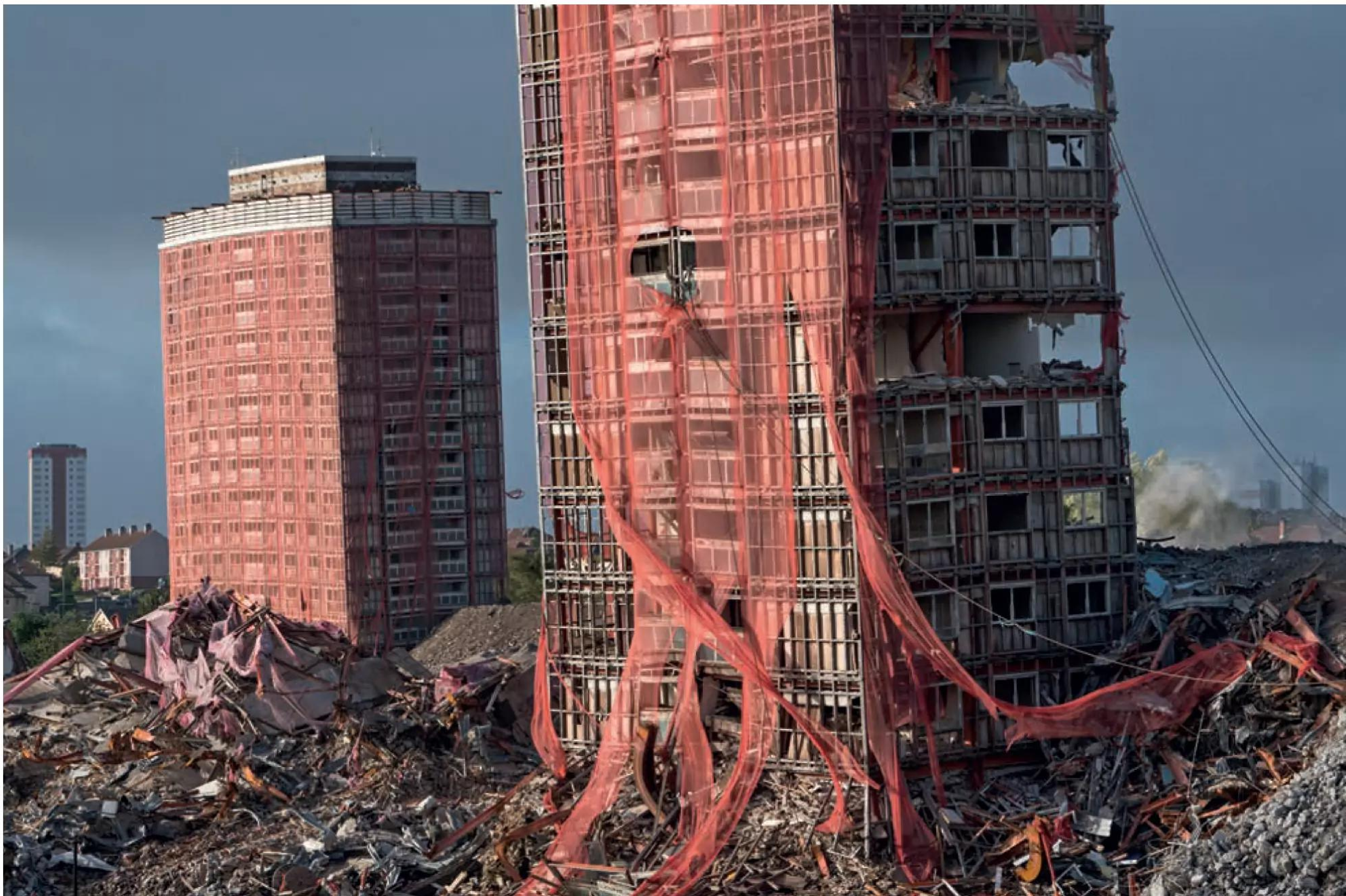
▼Consider a drone

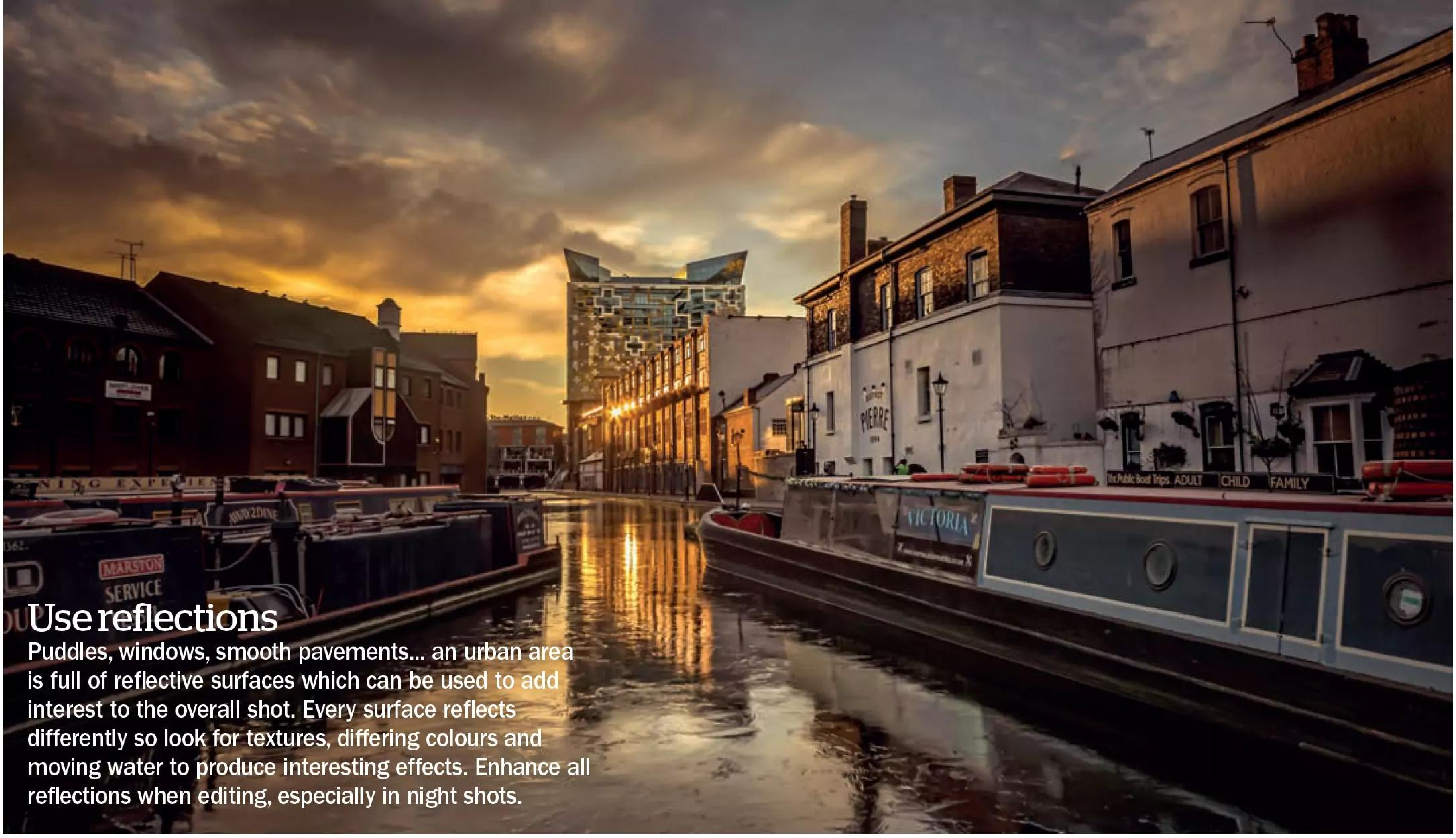
I used a drone to search for this image of industrial land reclamation; I love how the bulldozer tracks look like scribbles in an expressionist painting. The immediate area was a post-industrial wasteland of epic proportions. Persistence paid off, and after some hard legwork, I was able to make a series of images from this most unpromising location.



Local projects

Local projects that you can go to on a regular basis are a great idea. I had been following the destruction of these blocks of flats in Glasgow for four years. It was only by keeping my eye on the day-to-day progress that I was able to catch the drama of this apocalyptic scene.





Use reflections

Puddles, windows, smooth pavements… an urban area is full of reflective surfaces which can be used to add interest to the overall shot. Every surface reflects differently so look for textures, differing colours and moving water to produce interesting effects. Enhance all reflections when editing, especially in night shots.

Chris Fletcher

Birmingham-based Chris Fletcher fits photography around a full-time job, and therefore makes the most of living in the city to inspire his portfolio of urban landscapes. To see more of his work, visit **www.cpf-photography.com**

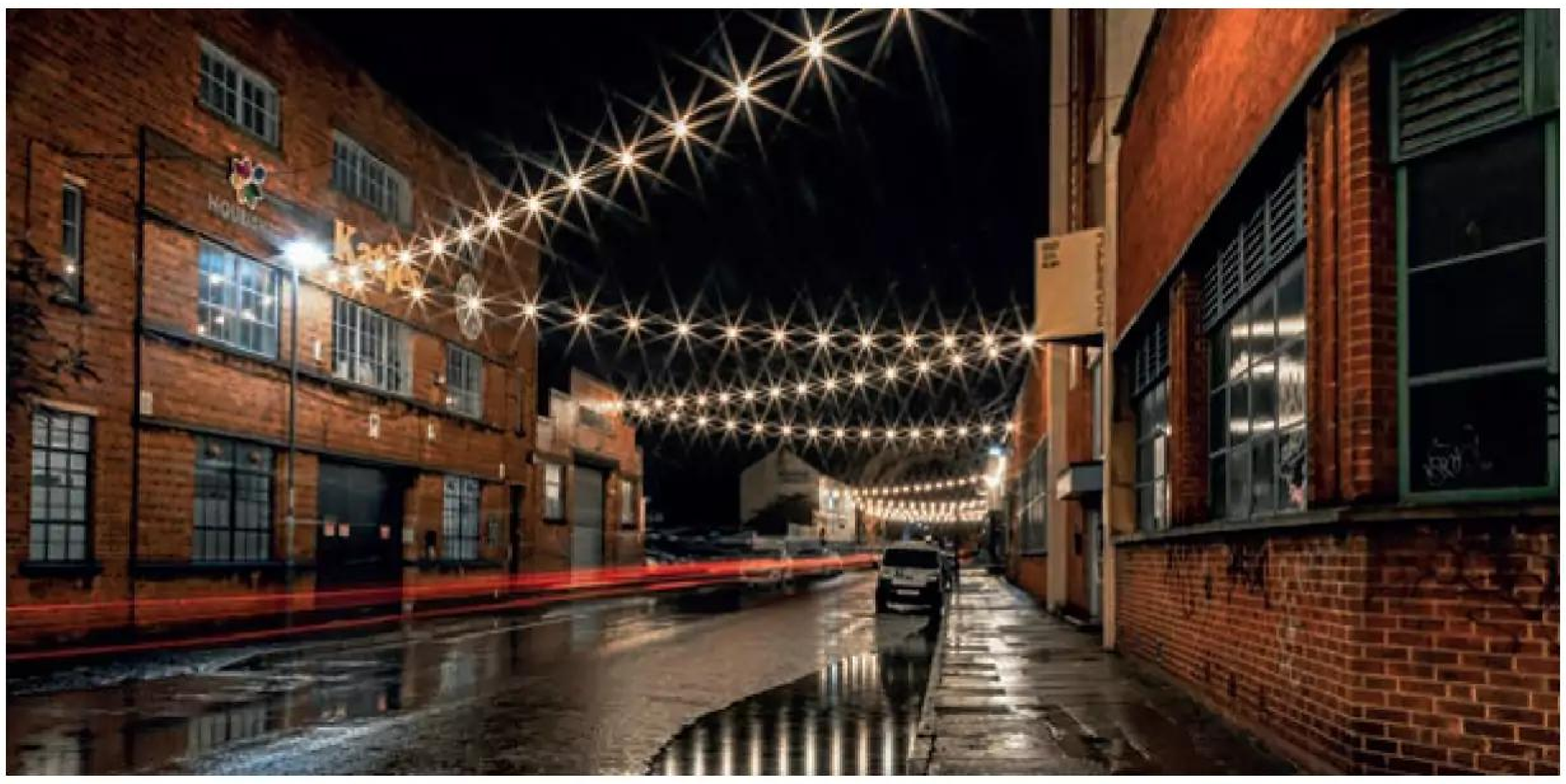
When shooting an urban landscape, I'm always looking for light. For example, it might be a single building lit up but surrounded by darkness, low sunlight casting long shadows, or office lights at night. Without the right light, an urban image can look flat and lifeless.

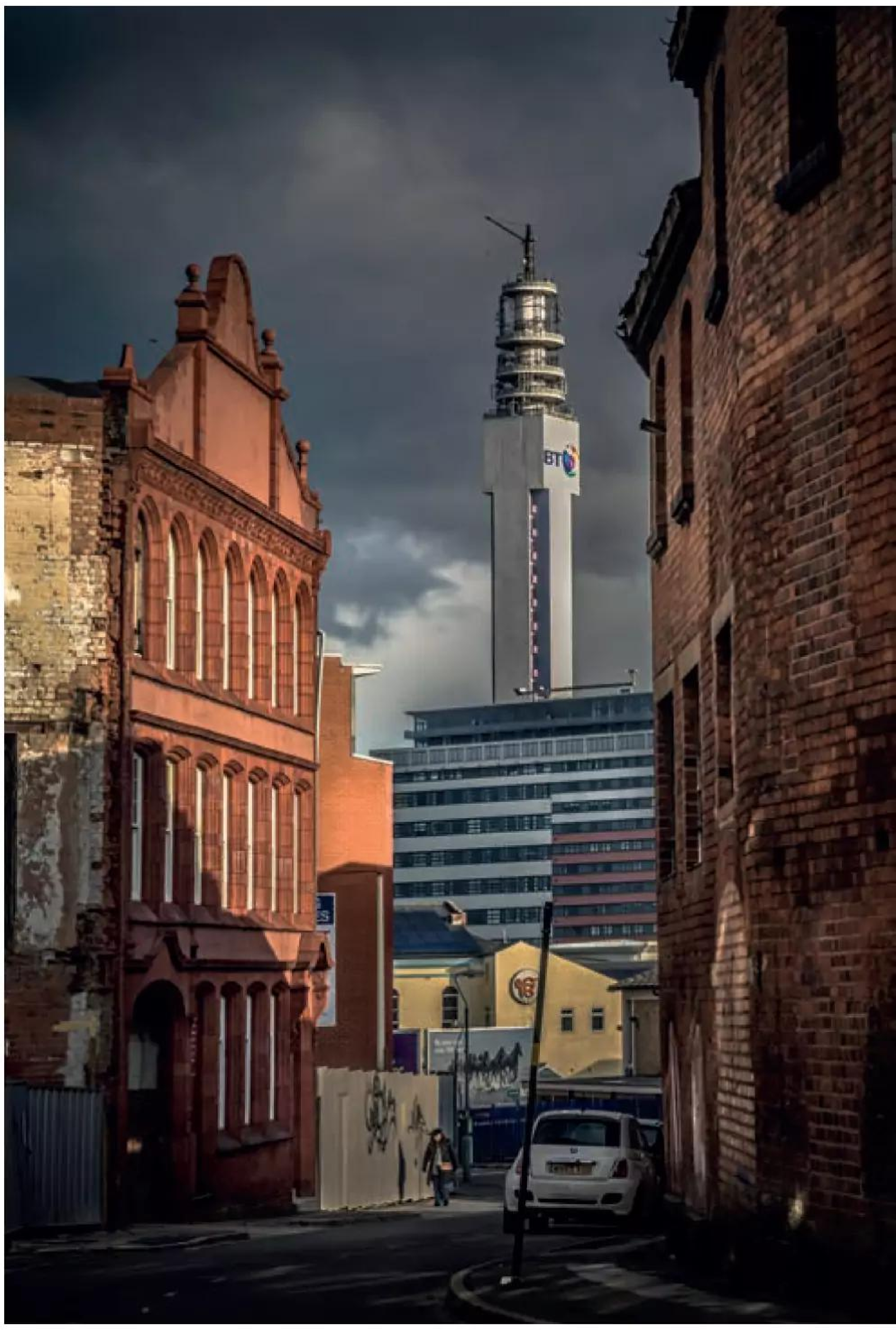
Once I've found my light, I consider composition and how well the scene works as a whole. Do the buildings complement each other? Which angle is best? Are there any peripheral items that may distract – or even better, add value? An interesting vehicle or colourful door can add to the scene. It's tempting to always use a wideangle lens, but sometimes zooming in works much better, even to 300mm.

I always use exposure compensation and bracket so I have multiple versions to select from. My kit consists of a camera body with a few lenses from 12mm to 300mm to get as much range as possible.

▼ The blue hour

Try capturing a city scene after the sun has just set, when the building lights start to illuminate the city. Or set up a tripod near a road and catch the lovely light trails and starbursts. Night transforms a city and even the simplest of compositions come alive.





▲ Portrait format

Shooting in portrait format opens up many compositions that you can't get with landscapes. Tall buildings fill the frame naturally, and are less likely to appear to be leaning back. Combine a portrait format with a wideangle lens and you can have the street and the entire building in one shot.

ALL PICTURES ON THIS PAGE © CHRIS FLETCHER (CPF PHOTOGRAPHY)

Low light is almost guaranteed to bring a city scene to life. A long exposure adds drama and movement

Shooting in **low li**

Low light can still yield great images – landscape and travel photographer **David Clapp** shares his top tips and techniques

Ardnamurchan Lighthouse, the most westerly point in Scotland, UK
Canon EOS-1D Mark II, 180mm, 4sec at f/29, ISO 50

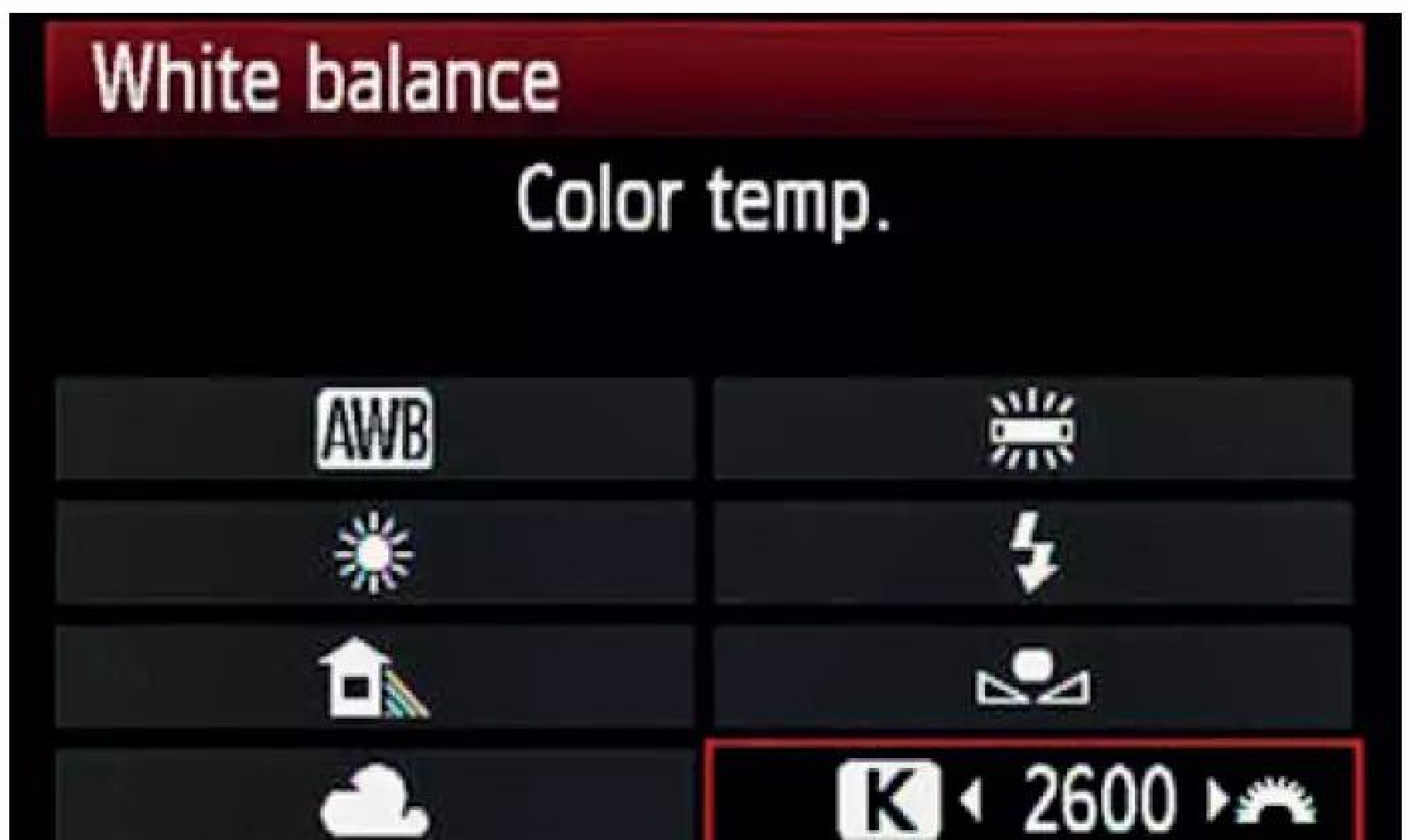
DAVID'S TOP TIPS FOR GETTING READY TO SHOOT

Camera settings

To ensure you get the very best imagery, you need to check your camera settings so that you shoot in raw and the camera's meter is set to a matrix or evaluative mode. Shoot in manual mode, choose an appropriate aperture and then set the shutter speed as required.

Colour balance

Colour balance can be critical when shooting in low light. Most modern LCD screens are very accurate. Ensure you have a colour balance that matches the scene (I recommend using the K setting), and then dial in a value.



White balance

Color temp.

AWB

K ◂ 2600 ▸

Tripod

All low-light photography will require either high ISOs or a tripod. Unless you are shooting silhouettes into the light with a high ISO, then a tripod is essential kit. It goes without saying that better-quality tripods will perform well in adverse weather conditions.

ght

ALL PICTURES © DAVID CLAPP

David Clapp

With over 12 years as a leading UK professional landscape, architecture and travel photographer, David Clapp classifies himself as a jack of all trades. Making a hit in the early digital days, he pioneered work in moonlight, astro and infrared. He is represented by Getty Images, and leads workshops worldwide.

One of the most critical lessons I have learned over the years is how our use of light defines us as photographers. Those who wait, with composition set, for the unusual or the sublime, will reach further and deeper into our hearts than those who simply collect. Composition is the stage and lighting is the performance. Those who favour light for composition will often fail to connect, just as those who choose composition over light leave us to imagine what could have been. Let me take you to a quieter time of day, to an intricate but richer world of darkness and of light.

When first starting out in photography, it is fair to say that timing is the most overlooked fundamental. Waterfalls and receding waves aside, it is also one of the least spoken about and can be quite confusing. Ever packed up, driven away and then seen the remarkable scene unfolding in the rear view mirror? On the dawn workshops I lead, I am often asked 'Why are we leaving so early?' But when the rich predawn glow leads to a fairly unexciting sunrise, everyone is glad they made the right choice and came along. What we

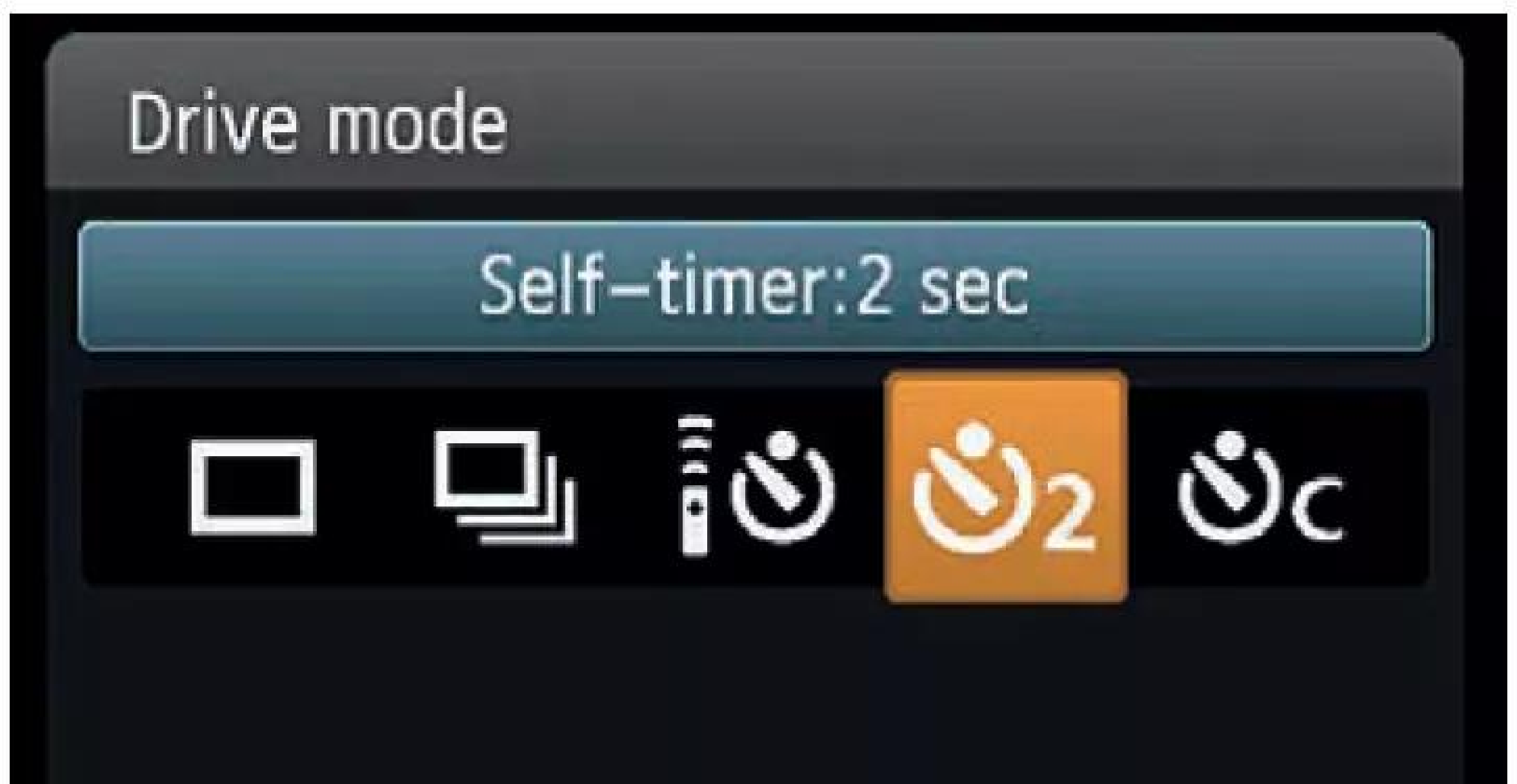
Sunset at Butter Cove, Bantham, Devon, England
Canon EOS 5D, 17-40mm, 30sec at f/16, ISO 200

Filters

Although not absolutely essential, graduated filters will help to control the light – especially when the contrast of the sky is excessive in comparison to the ground. Graduated filters are great for controlling light in the landscape, but align them carefully so their use is invisible.

Two-second timer

Use a remote release or the self-timer mode for hands-free shooting. The use of an additional feature, mirror lock-up, can only benefit, especially if your set-up is not the most stable. This keeps your hands off the camera so you can gain maximum sharpness.



Drive mode

Self–timer:2 sec

Five simple steps for shooting in low light

Step 1
Composition

Do not tether yourself to a tripod at the start. Move around, find the correct height and focal length and then chop the air – 'the tripod goes here, at this height.' All the decisions have now been made. No more tethered frustrations thinking you can't see the shot.

Step 2
Aperture

Next, make some decisions about your composition – does it require a larger depth of field such as f/16? If so, it will let less light into the camera. If you are photographing from a viewpoint, or your subject is further away, then you can choose a wider aperture like f/5.6.

Step 3
Set your shutter speed

Simply look through your viewfinder and set the shutter speed so the exposure needle is in the middle of the exposure scale. This doesn't necessarily mean you will have the right exposure, it just means you have set the camera to a good starting point.

Step 4
Live View mode

Engage your camera's live view and switch on your histogram. This will give you an accurate render of the colours in each channel. You will regularly see highlights clipping out in the red channel at sunset, so ensure a 3-channel histogram is switched on.

Step 5
Test shots

Take a test shot based off that exposure setting, and check the result. If the image does not match what you see, then it is usually an exposure or a colour balance issue. Nudge your shutter speed so that the highlights are very close to clipping, or apply a filter for the sky and lift the exposure even more.

are identifying here is that there are many valuable moments outside the obvious and we need to learn not only when these occur, but also when they are about to happen.

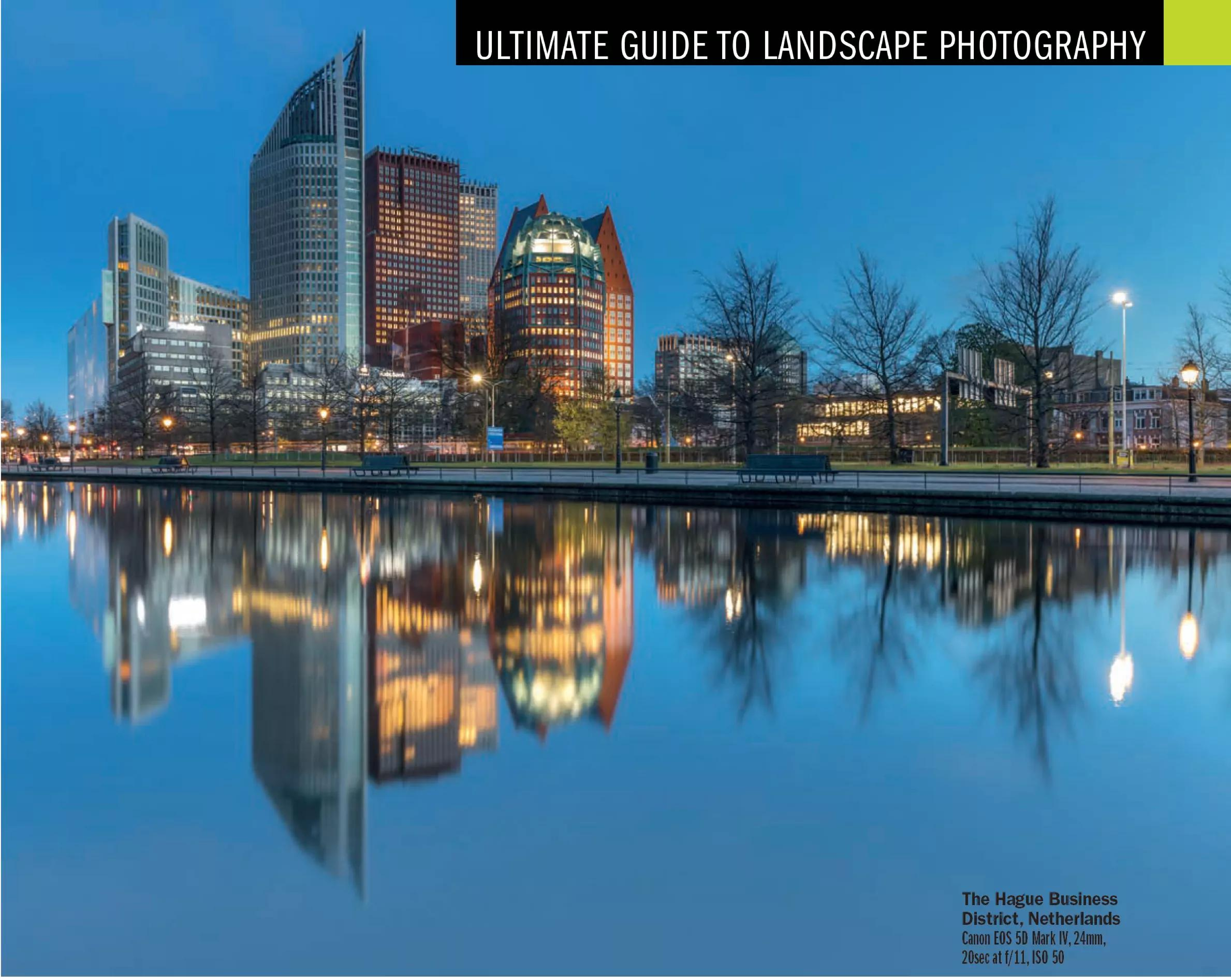
My one rule for shooting landscapes is: 'It's best to stay put until you need a torch.' Cameras now have wonderful dynamic range to be able to see into those shadows, so use them to their full potential. On the coast, the beach becomes deserted just when the light and dark come together magically and balance perfectly. It's something I learned on clear evenings, shooting the south Devon coastline. The best shot was often taken 40 minutes after sunset, when the horizon was glowing orange and the sky a deep blue. There are some important factors to consider before changing the topic to shooting in a city, so let's look at these.

Shooting at the coast

First, you will reach a point when, for around 10 minutes, everything in the scene will come together. Saturation and contrast will balance before twilight gives way to the night. Resist taking a picture until all aspects come together. There is no point pressing the shutter until this crescendo is reached. Why? It will just look like daylight, without anything special. Moments later, once the balance is lost, the shadows become jet black and the connection is lost, as the eye becomes confused by the lack of detail. No ISO increase or extended shutter speed can compensate for this inevitable light failure, so switch on the torch and go home.

Your camera direction in relation to the sun will greatly influence the timing in low light. If you have a viable composition in the opposite direction to the sunset, the light will

Aurora over Castlerigg Stone Circle, Keswick, Cumbria
Canon EOS 5D Mark IV, 24mm, 25sec at f/8, ISO 3200



The Hague Business District, Netherlands
Canon EOS 5D Mark IV, 24mm, 20sec at f/11, ISO 50

fall much faster as the earth spins away. If you are lucky to have two compositions, one in each direction, you will literally become a military gunner, spinning the camera as you turn into and away from the light. Spend your time looking at the shadows between shots. Can you still see them? This is crucial.

Then let us not forget the power of silhouettes. Let's throw the 'shadows rule' in the bin now and embrace a far simpler compositional approach. Shooting into the light when the contrast is extreme can simplify things in a magical way by abandoning the need to retain detail in the shadows. Think of cracked branches of a tree against twilight, silhouetted and reflected people on a glassy beach, or a long-lens shot of the Big Ben tower against the rising moon. With this rule, you can simply expose for the light and throw the subject into the black with great effect.

The Agora as seen from the park bridge in Valencia, Spain
Canon EOS 5D Mark II, 24mm, 5sec at f/11, ISO 100

3 tips for the low-light city photographer

1 When working in cities it's a very good idea to spend time walking around your subject during the day – not only to work out camera angles, but also to ensure your own safety. Using London as an example, a tripod will alert security and lead to police interaction if you try to fight your corner, so find out what you can and cannot do in advance. It's not worth the hassle.

2 Expect to win and lose on your first low-light shoot, especially if you are learning the area. You may find that unsightly sodium street lighting is so overwhelming past a certain time, that you will abandon the night shoot and work both at dawn and dusk, using smaller windows of opportunity to get all your subjects covered.

3 Try to coincide your city shoot with a full moon. Nothing looks more beautiful than a full moon rising over the cityscape, so try to plan your angles using a smartphone app, such as The Photographer's Ephemeris or PhotoPills. The power of the moon acts like a gigantic flashlight, so the sky never gets truly dark, which helps lift those deep blues and provide a fabulous backdrop.

Now let's consider the technical pointers. Ten years ago, in digital's infancy, dynamic range was a much bigger issue than it is now. My first digital camera had a nine-stop dynamic range. But now all digital cameras far exceed this, with at least 12-13 stops, even for crop-sensor cameras. This means a huge range of detail is captured. Remember, all of a digital camera's recovery is in the shadows, with very little recovery available in the highlights, so always ensure the highlights are not blown.

As we often deal with excessive contrast, graduated filters can help immensely. Often the brightest part of the image for the landscape photographer is the horizon, so graduated filters can keep things under control and extend options. Exposure-blending in low light, by taking a range of exposures on a tripod, can help fix contrast later on in Photoshop. It can help get areas of the picture under complete control and improved on.

Two photographers capture the evening sky with the moon setting behind them, Eystrahorn, Iceland
Canon EOS-1D X, 70-300mm, 1.6sec at f/8, ISO 800

Shooting in the city

The low-light city photographer has the same issues and perhaps more to contend with. With a mix of natural and artificial light, low-light photography decisions are even more critical. We also have to include multiple colour balances into the timing, but the principle is still the same.

Low-light cityscapes can be spectacular, and over the years, I have found that certain locations, such as the metropolises of Hong Kong, Singapore and Shanghai have such a vast height and array of light sources that they can be photographed all night, literally. Other European cities become overwhelmed with heavy orange sodium lighting as soon as the light starts to fade, so it's very important to take this into account.

Remember, when the crowds depart a sunset viewpoint – after an uneventful orangeade-coloured ball sinks into the sea – perhaps the magic that didn't happen is yet to come. By embracing the edge of darkness, you'll push your portfolio into a new and exciting world. AP

The moon rising over the city centre, Rotterdam, Netherlands
Canon EOS 5D Mark IV, 100-400mm, 6sec at f/8, ISO 400

Low-light panoramas

Low-light panoramas require a significant amount of time and planning, but are well worth the extra thought when you see the end result. The first and most crucial point is to consider your timing very carefully.

If you have to shoot seven 30sec images, that's 2mins 30secs of exposure time. If you consider at least 10secs in between each shot to recompose the next frame, that's more than one minute more. The length of time between the first and end frames can be as much as five minutes, so the light can drop significantly over this period, making for a very odd end result.

Step 1 Unless you are working in a tighter space, I suggest using a focal length of at least 50mm for a panorama to avoid a rather stretchy or bulging look. I prefer to work further back with even longer focal lengths for most of my images, and have recently got into shooting each frame at nearly 600mm, for a very small but detailed slice of the view.

Step 2 Work out the start and end points of your panorama. Using a longer lens will make for a super high-resolution shot, but it will take many more exposures to accomplish.

Step 3 Turn on live view and engage the histogram. Pan through the scene to find the brightest part of the view and set your shutter speed to get the best exposure based on this zone. You may start out thinking the panorama will be underexposed, but you will soon swing into the correct exposure.

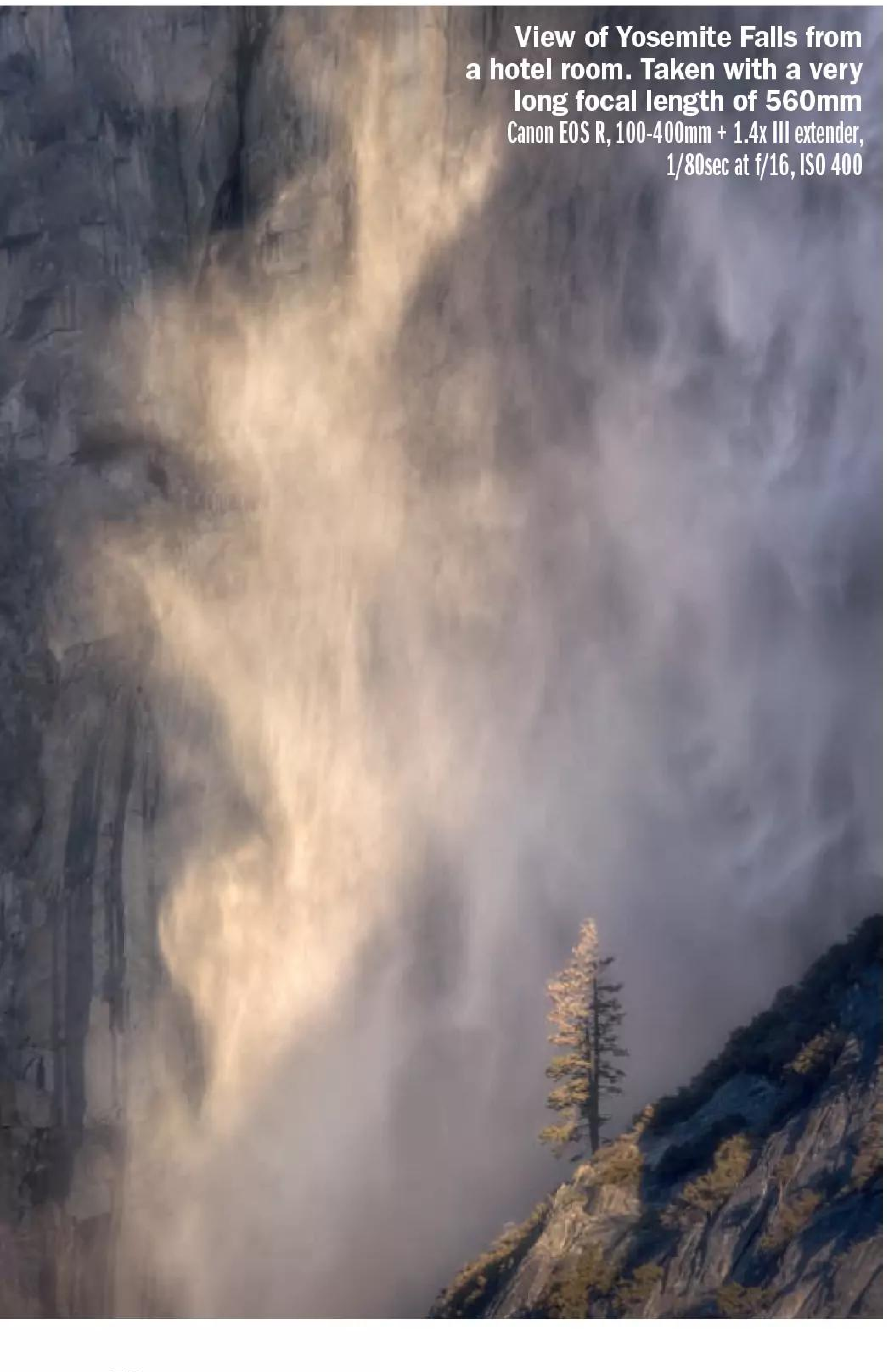
Step 4 Engage the rule of thirds grid view in live view. It's a common misconception that panoramic heads are needed for scenic work, but all you need is the grid switched on to provide a third overlap between each of your exposures.

Dusk at Porth Nanven in Cornwall
Canon EOS-1Ds Mark III, 17-40mm, 30sec at f/11, ISO 400

Charlotte Gibb
Charlotte is a California-based landscape/nature photographer and educator. See **www.charlottegibbblog.com**, or on Facebook **@charlottegibbphotography** and Instagram **@charlottegibb.** She is the author of *Get Intimate: Making A Personal Statement with Intimate Landscapes* and her work has been exhibited at the Ansel Adams Gallery, Yosemite National Park.

Intimate landscapes

Three photographers discuss the art and craft of intimate spring photography, and how to make your images stand out from the rest, with **Claire Gillo**



View of Yosemite Falls from a hotel room. Taken with a very long focal length of 560mm
Canon EOS R, 100-400mm + 1.4x III extender, 1/80sec at f/16, ISO 400

'INTIMATE landscapes are compositions that have been derived from the larger scene,' says US photographer Charlotte Gibb. 'It could be a photograph of a small section of beach, or a group of trees, or it could be a photograph of a section of an entire mountain.

'Typically, the sky is not part of the composition, so intimate landscapes don't rely on attention-grabbing sunsets. They are more subtle, and, for me, often have an element of symbolism in them,' she continues. 'It can be a challenge. Intimate landscapes can't rely on grand, colourful scenes to inspire awe in the viewer, so the photographer has to be more clever about how to compose. Don't feel dispirited if your photographs aren't compelling when you start. Just keep at it.'

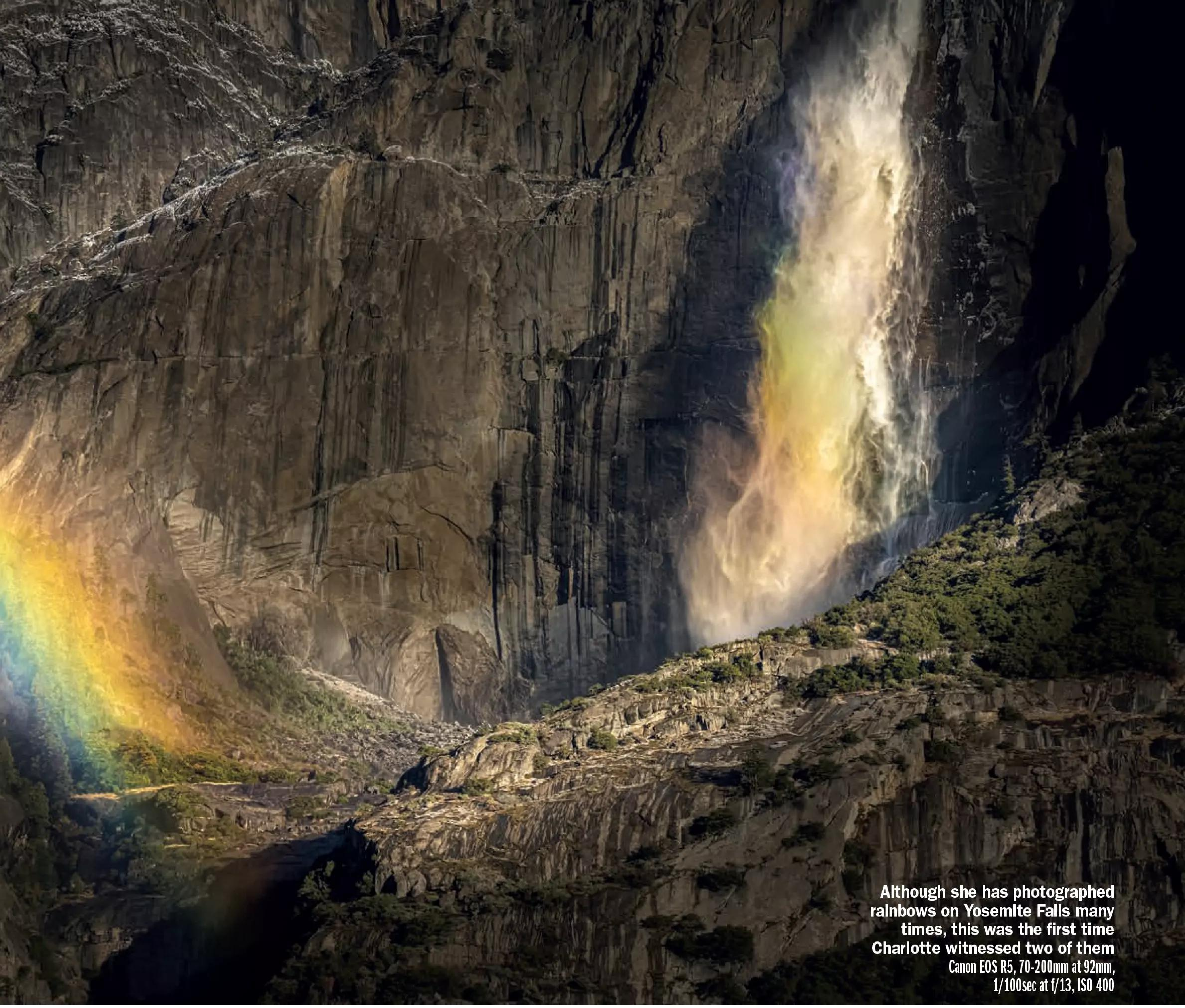
Rather than hunting for subjects, Charlotte studies a scene for design elements. 'What shapes do I see?' she says. 'Pine trees are triangle shapes. Deciduous trees in winter are a series of lines. I look for repeating patterns, or contrasting colours. I also look for interesting light.'

Charlotte's stamping ground is California. It's home to a variety of landscapes, from rugged coastlines to ancient Redwood trees and deserts. 'My heart-of-hearts is with the Sierra Nevada mountains and Yosemite National Park, though. There is tremendous diversity, and as much as I go back again and again, I always come away with a new composition. My most meaningful work has come from these places.'

Taking precautions

When asked how she keeps herself safe in this environment Charlotte replies, 'Good question! Yosemite wildlife isn't really dangerous unless you look for trouble. Sure, we have black bears, but they are more interested in your sandwich than in you. We do have mountain lions, and like bears, they can be dangerous if they have cubs nearby, but otherwise they are reclusive. I have never seen one in the wild, though.

'The biggest danger in Yosemite is one's own recklessness. I also carry a Spot GPS device. It allows my

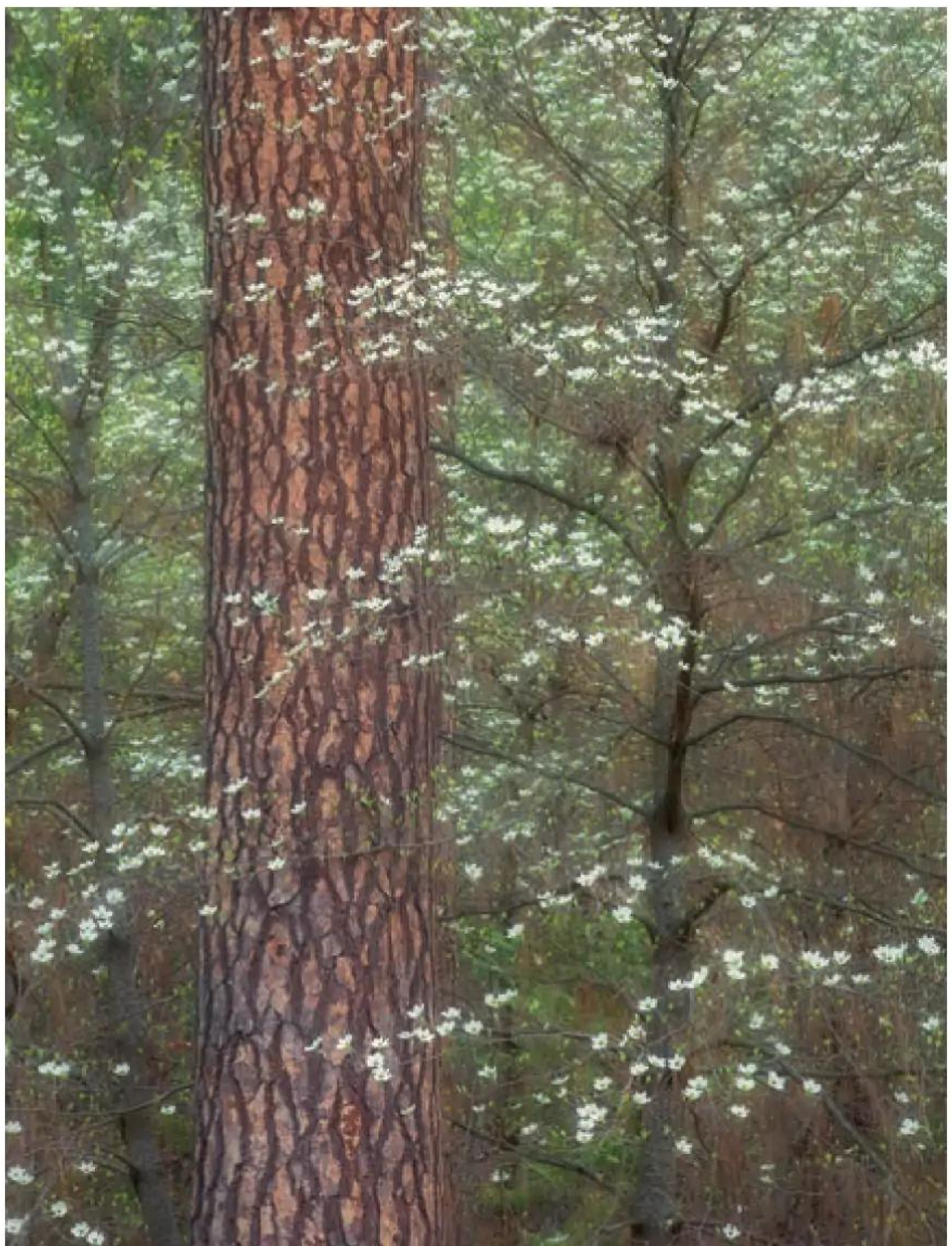


Although she has photographed rainbows on Yosemite Falls many times, this was the first time Charlotte witnessed two of them
Canon EOS R5, 70-200mm at 92mm, 1/100sec at f/13, ISO 400

husband to keep track of where I am, and would also let me call in the helicopters if I were to find myself in a critical situation. Fortunately, that has never happened.'

Charlotte has two Canon EOS R5 bodies and a variety of Canon RF lenses. 'But my favourite lens is my Canon RF 70-200mm f/2.8 L IS USM – it's my precious!' she jokes. 'It has the perfect range of focal lengths for my type of photography. Long lenses are great for creating atmosphere and zeroing in on smaller sections of the landscape. I also love my Arca-Swiss d4 Tripod Head with a Classic Knob (Geared). It allows me to make minute adjustments when composing.' When it comes to composition, Charlotte likes to stay spontaneous. 'The feeling of connection with nature is key. I internalise what is around me.'

Right: Dogwoods bloom in abundance in Yosemite Valley in the spring, but congregate in just a few places. This scene was spotted near the east end of the valley
Canon EOS 5D Mark II, 24-105mm at 105mm, 2.5secs at f/16, ISO 100



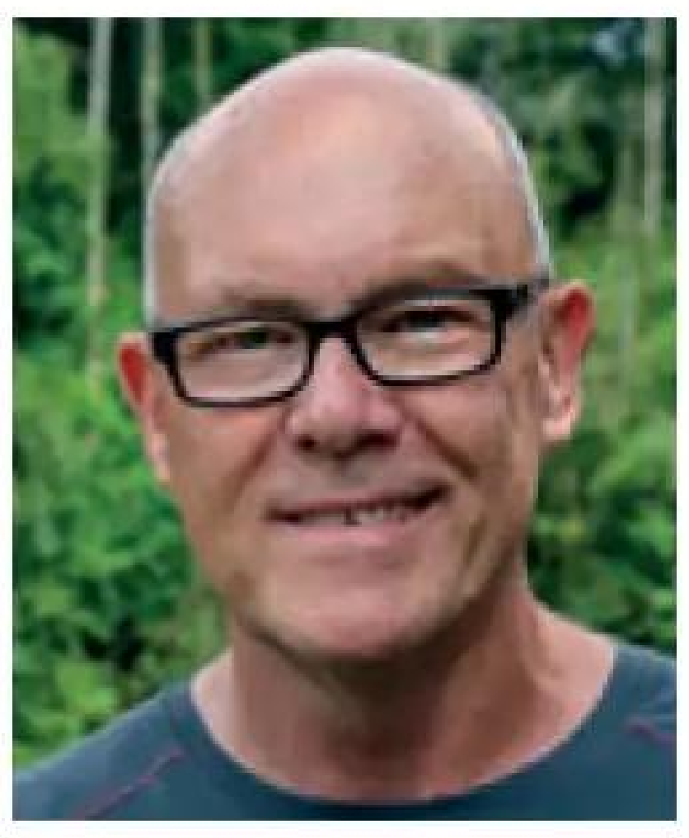
Charlotte's top tips

1 Slow down. Find solitude. Connect with nature. Explore. Be curious.

2 Zoom in. Either use a longer lens, or zoom with your feet. Getting up close will help to eliminate distracting elements in the scene and simplify the composition.

3 Eliminate the sky. The sky is usually the brightest part of the picture and will draw the eye away from your subject like a magnet.

Mark Gilligan



Mark has been a professional photographer for more than 40 years. He is a LEE Filters Master, a winner of the #OMGB in LPOTY, and runs workshops in the Lake District and Snowdonia. Find out more at **www.wastwaterphotography.co.uk** and follow on social media **@wastwater1**

MARK GILLIGAN enjoys hunting for less obvious landscapes. 'As well as larger, grander, landscapes, I also derive pleasure in finding images that aren't so obvious. These could be very close. Some are smaller views or segments of the view that you decide to isolate.'

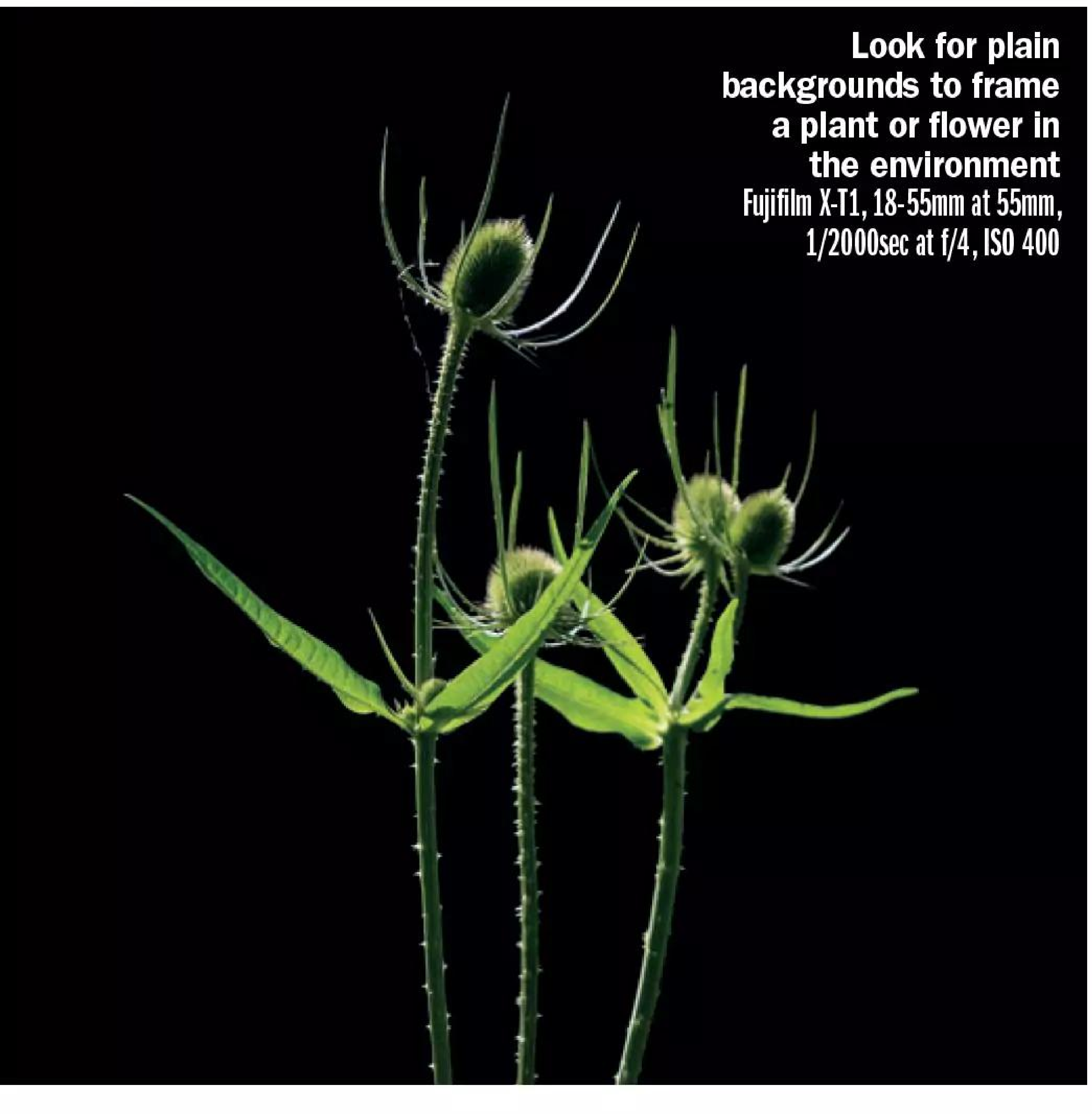
In his kit bag, Mark has a Fujifilm X-Pro2 and to shoot his close-up landscapes switches between his Fujifilm XF 16-55mm f/2.8 and Fujifilm XF 55-140mm f/2.8 lenses. 'The 16-55mm is my go-to lens, though,' he says. 'I often shoot using a shallow depth of field which works well with the longer zoom.' Occasionally, he will handhold his camera, but most of the time uses his Gitzo tripod.

Mark loves the spring light. 'The light begins to get harder, which I find works well with the water-based images,' he says. 'I like to retain the detail and "over cook" the surroundings to the limit, thus enabling me to get the image I want. I hardly do anything in post.'

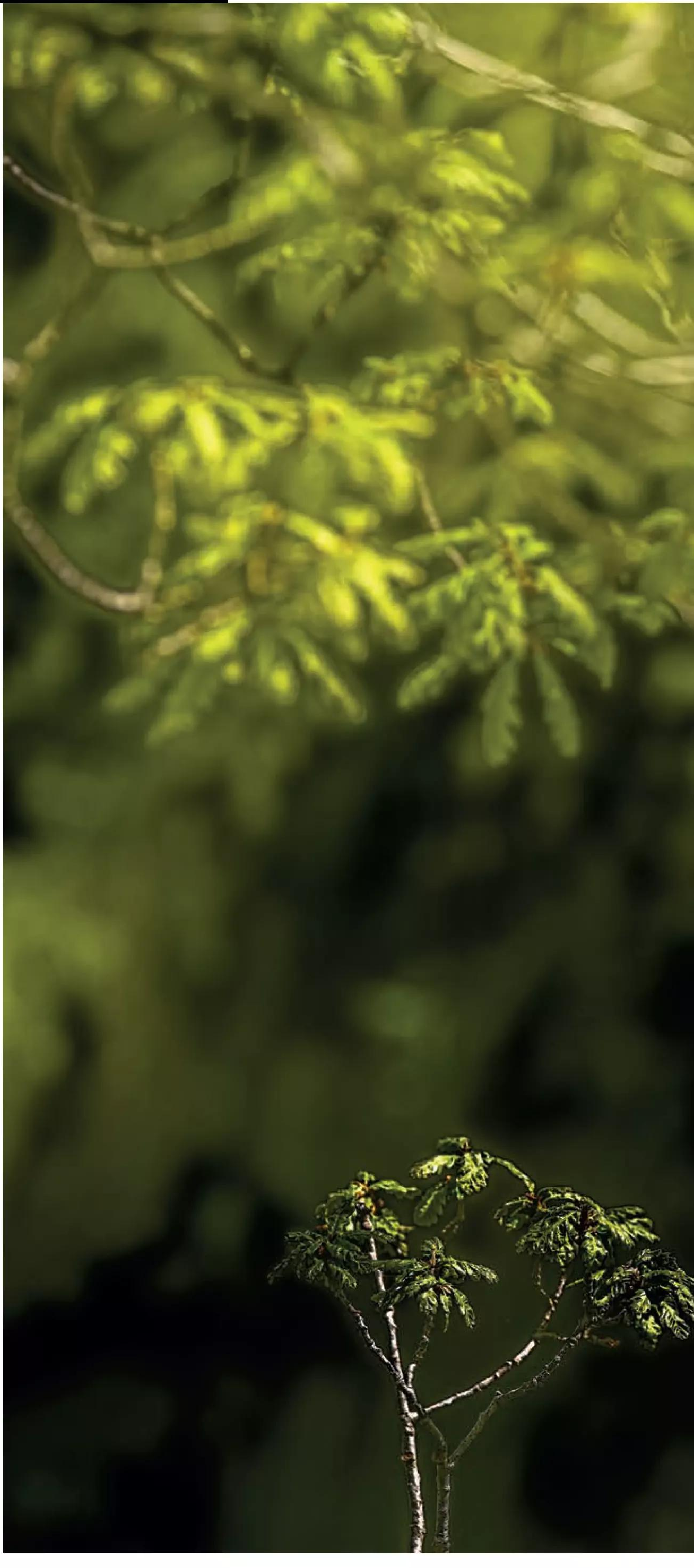
Seeking the right subject

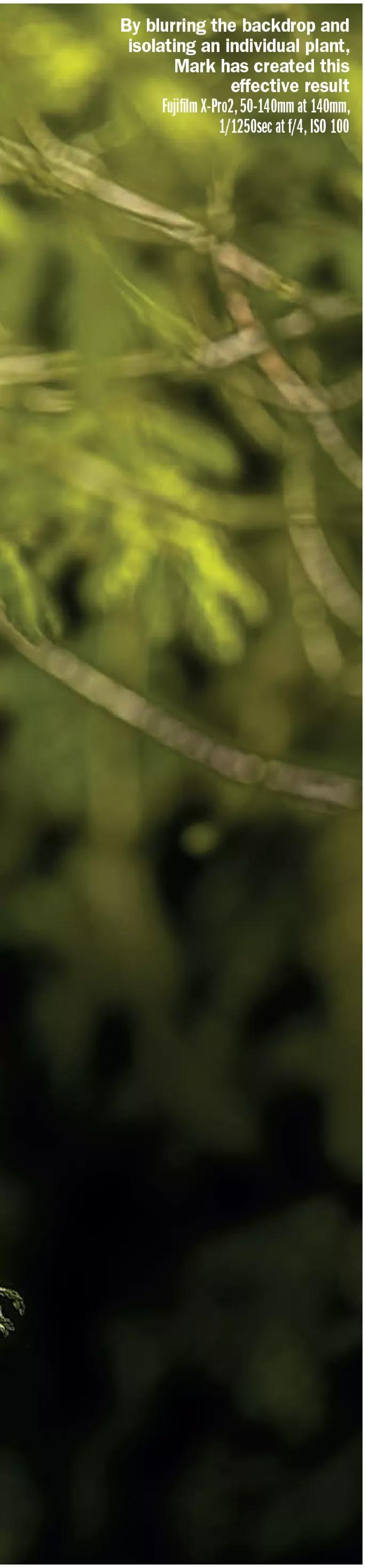
To find the perfect subject for his intimate landscapes, Mark will scan the scene to find elements of interest, and doesn't like to restrict himself. 'If I see something and it appeals, I will try my best to photograph it and do it justice,' he says. 'I like that old word "serendipity". I'll happen upon it and if I like it, I'll take it.

'A forest can be a good location, but being by the waterside has produced many great images for me – I particularly like photographing reeds. They are usually at their best in the spring and summer, and hard light allows me to overexpose the water, which retains the



Look for plain backgrounds to frame a plant or flower in the environment
Fujifilm X-T1, 18-55mm at 55mm, 1/2000sec at f/4, ISO 400





By blurring the backdrop and isolating an individual plant, Mark has created this effective result
Fujifilm X-Pro2, 50-140mm at 140mm, 1/1250sec at f/4, ISO 100

Use the harsher light conditions of spring to your advantage to get results like Mark's shot of leaves and reeds
Fujifilm X-Pro2, 50-140mm at 140mm, 1/500sec at f/4, ISO 200

detail in the plants. Sometimes I can isolate them but a "gaggle" of them can produce interesting abstracts and be just as appealing.'

Mark also finds quarry rock to be good in damp conditions. 'Wet slate can produce some outstanding colours and potential images.'

To edit his images, Mark uses Lightroom. 'As I shoot in raw, I make a couple of tweaks, but I use the spot meter on my camera (I know I am old school) and my LEE filters so my exposures are usually very accurate. In short, I can generally deliver an image in under a minute.' Mark prefers to spend his days outside shooting, rather than sat for hours inside at the computer.

While traditional in his approach, he also pushes the boundaries. 'Once I see a subject, I may take it faithfully or create the final result in camera by controlling the light,' he says. 'Intimate landscape means different things to many people. It is the one area of my photography where I am happy to experiment and not faithfully photograph what I see, because I am after something different. In order to do this, you need to understand what you are doing with your camera, so make an effort to learn how to control it.'

Mark's top tips

1 Scope where you are. Not just for that day but for the future. Some things will be obvious, but take your time and look.

2 Never be downhearted; if it doesn't always work – at least try!

3 Experiment and don't be afraid to push the boundaries.

Below: Make use of empty space in your compositions to create a feeling of calm and tranquillity
1/30sec at f/3.2, ISO 200

Jo Stephen

Jo is a naturalist and environmentalist, and has been taking photographs in her local landscape for many years. She also works in nature conservation. Her photography explores her connection to the natural world and her place within it, and is created ethically with a minimal carbon and ecological footprint. Find out more at **www.jostephen.photography**, and follow on social media **@joannunaki**

SPRING has always been Jo Stephen's favourite season. 'I live in a village surrounded by woodlands carpeted in bluebells and wild garlic in the spring. Watching the landscape transform so dynamically in the spring inspires a lot of my work.'

Jo shoots on her old yet reliable Sony A58 and Olympus OM-D E-M10 III. 'As much as I'd love a more capable camera, particularly one with in-camera multiple exposure, as an environmentalist I'm happy to continue using these,' she says. 'I shoot nearly everything with my macro lens, even landscapes. Spring is a wonderful time for more creative techniques, such as intentional camera movement and multiple exposure. Using movement when shooting is an effective way of communicating the dynamism of the season.'

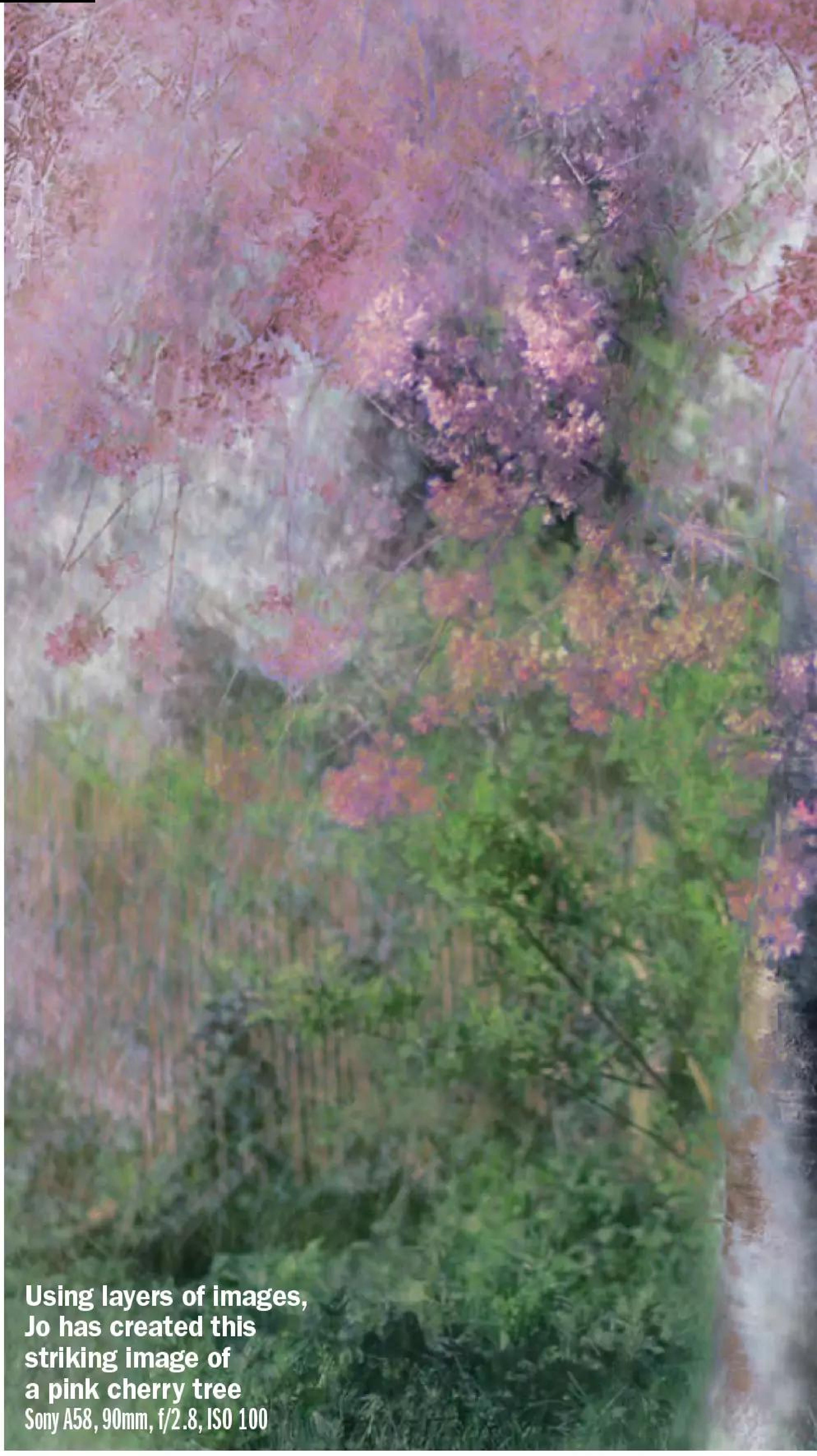
To find the perfect subject, Jo likes to give herself freedom to experiment, and to explore colours, textures and forms that resonate in the landscape. 'Don't worry what anyone else is shooting and don't get fixated on what kit you have – you can take great images on cheap cameras.' She continues, 'Shooting up close opens myriad tiny worlds, so if like me you only shoot what's on your doorstep, it's still going to take several lifetimes to get bored with the vistas. It should be about the joy of creating, and that means sometimes you'll come back with awful results, but that's how you learn and evolve.'

To create her abstracts, Jo uses a couple of techniques. 'Much of my work involves intentional camera movement (ICM) to varying degrees,' she explains. 'It may be that I take a few blurry shots to use as textures with static shots, or ICM may be the focus of the image I'm creating, as in the bluebell shot. I like to use subtle movement and will pause during the motion to let elements of the composition "stick" and remain in focus. I look for texture and light in the composition; any highlights will become streaks and lines throughout the image, so you need to think about how you will use those if you start moving the camera erratically. It can be hit and miss whether the light will create interesting or jarring shapes. I like to make use of contrast, and often look for light subjects against a darker or boldly coloured background.'

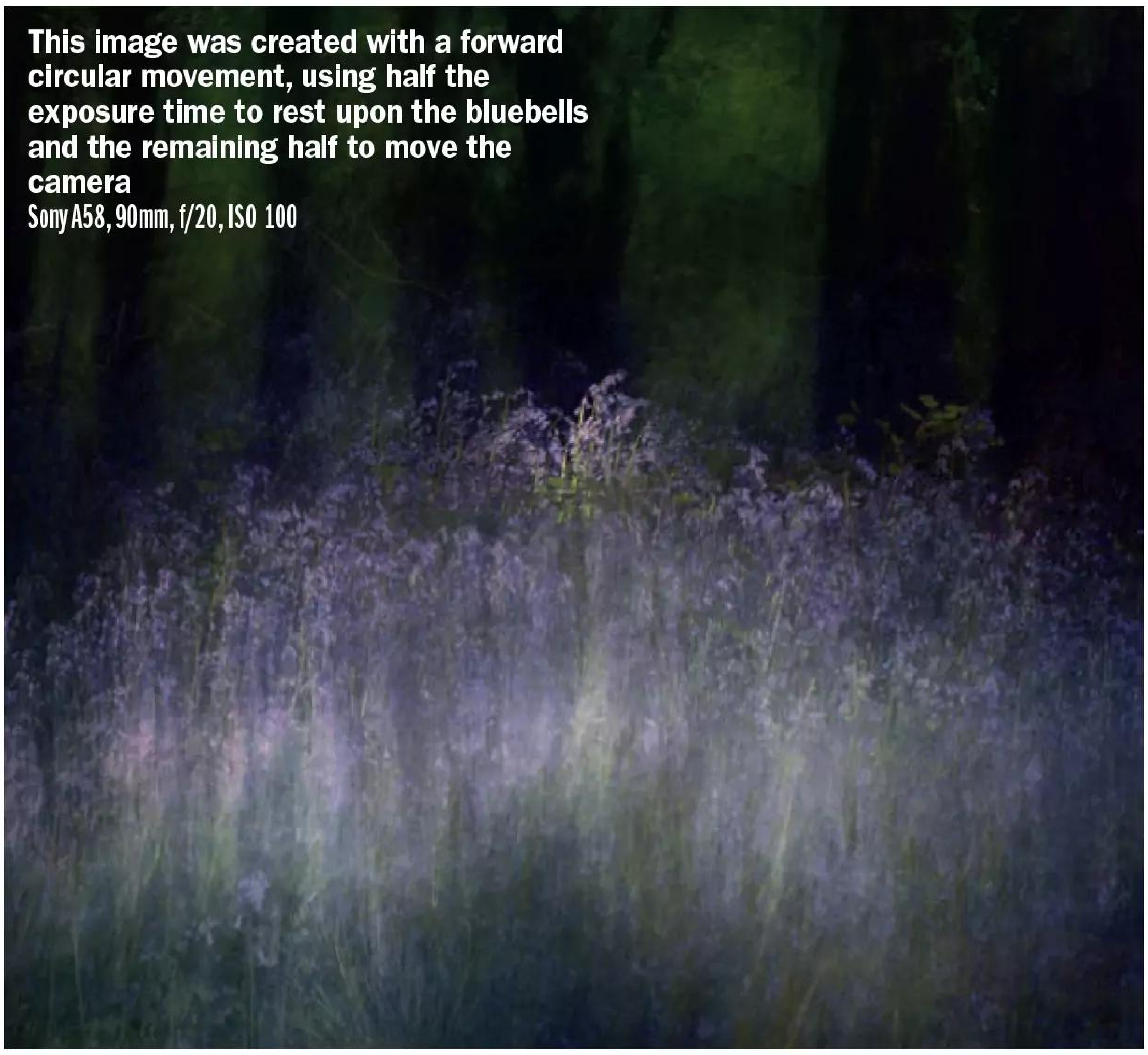
Multiple exposures

Jo also likes to layer her images using multiple exposures. 'As I only have an old entry-level camera, I am unable to do this in camera, so this work is made in post. I'll collect a few images, both ICM and static, and maybe a few that are completely out of focus, to add colour and texture. After a while you get an idea of what you need to shoot to create the images you have in your mind later at the computer.'

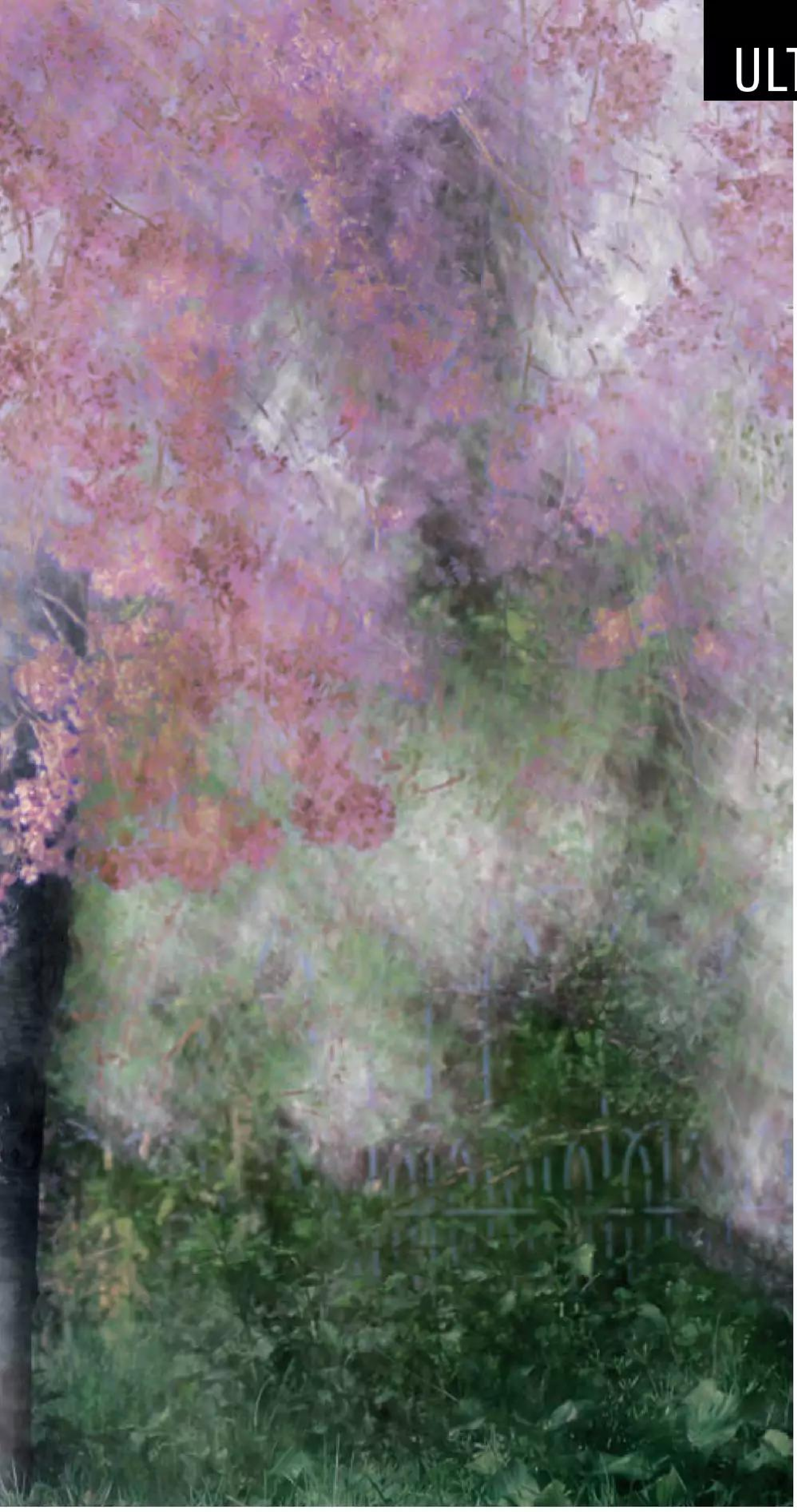
When it comes to taking intimate landscapes, for Jo the joy is not so much in the final result but rather the act of being in nature. 'Shoot what you love – for me that's my walks in the woods and meadows. I think if you care about your subject, then you'll connect with it and find



Using layers of images, Jo has created this striking image of a pink cherry tree
Sony A58, 90mm, f/2.8, ISO 100



This image was created with a forward circular movement, using half the exposure time to rest upon the bluebells and the remaining half to move the camera
Sony A58, 90mm, f/20, ISO 100

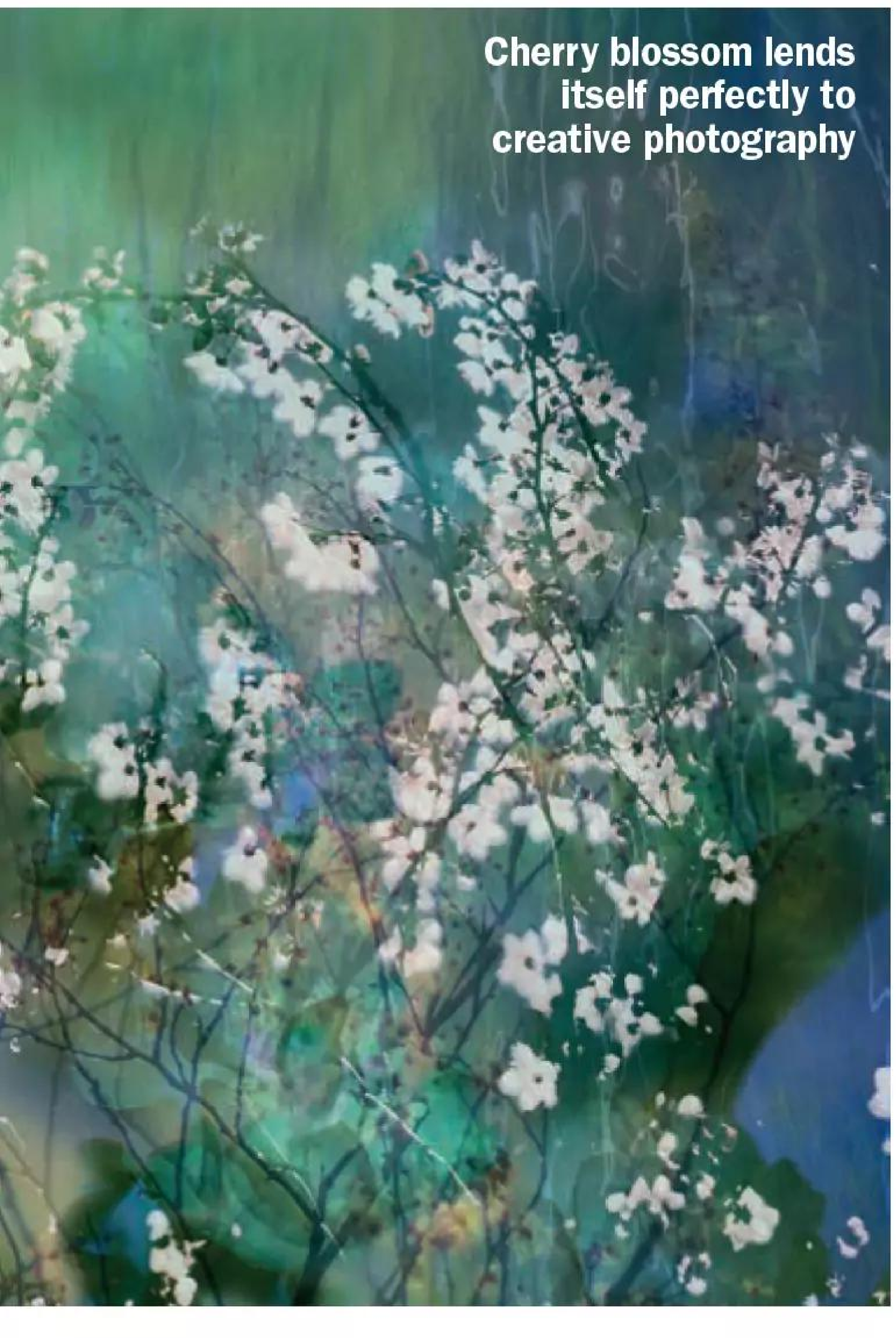


a way to express that connection. For me, photography is about the process, not the resulting image.'

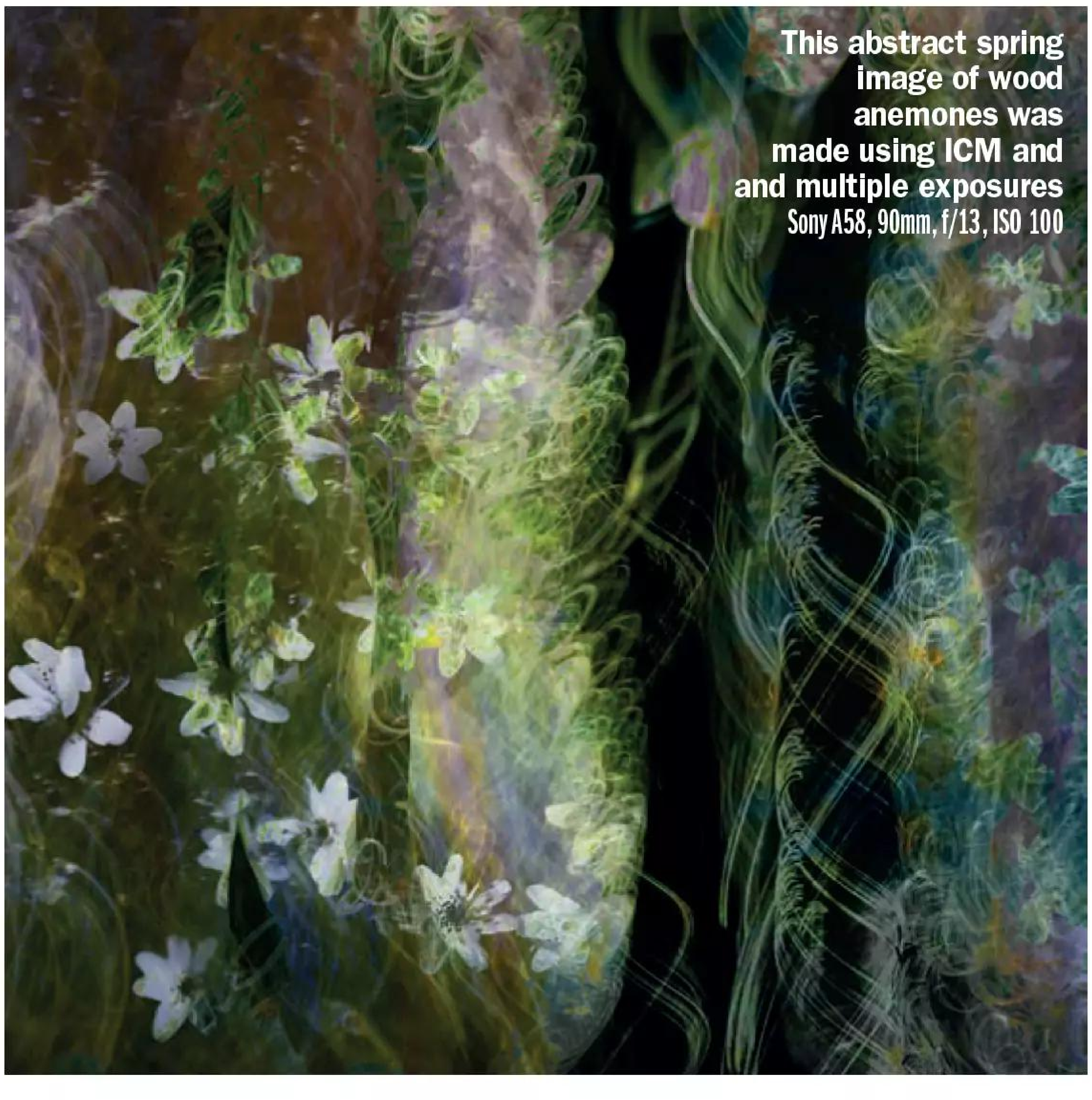
She continues with a word of warning. 'Any nature photographer needs to be mindful of their subject. Basic field skills will help you to get closer to nature and understand the behaviours of the wildlife you're watching. But, more important is the need not to disturb or impact in any way on those natural behaviours. For this reason I won't share locations of rare species and don't geotag.'

Jo recommends any nature photographer to have a look at the RPS Nature Photographers' Code of Practice, which outlines best practice for ethical nature photography.

Go in close to find a whole other world of flowers and species
Sony A58, 90mm, f/2.8 at 1/2500sec, ISO 100



Cherry blossom lends itself perfectly to creative photography



This abstract spring image of wood anemones was made using ICM and and multiple exposures
Sony A58, 90mm, f/13, ISO 100

Jo's top tips

1 Visit the woods in the early morning or evening, as the light provides that beautiful contrast.

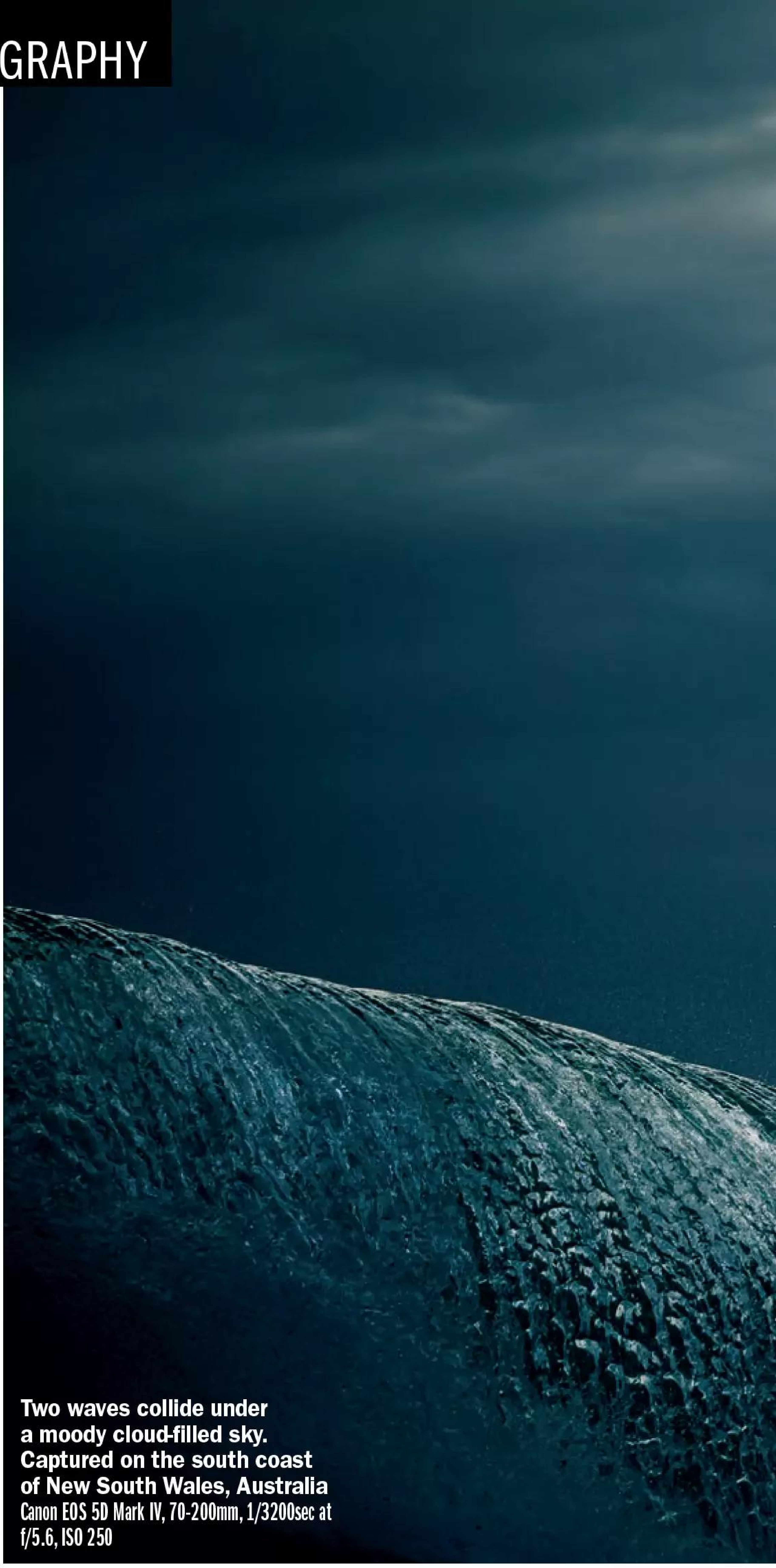
2 Shoot into the light with a wide aperture for airy, romantic images.

3 Look for pattern or contrast in the landscape (intimate or wide), as this makes for great ICM imagery.

Emanate

By Warren Keelan

Having always been fascinated by nature, Warren Keelan tells **Claire Gillo** about how he captures emotional images of the ocean



Two waves collide under a moody cloud-filled sky. Captured on the south coast of New South Wales, Australia
Canon EOS 5D Mark IV, 70-200mm, 1/3200sec at f/5.6, ISO 250

© WARREN KEELAN

It takes a lot of skill and a strong swimming ability to be able to produce the kind of results that Australian photographer Warren Keelen can achieve. Not only does he have to think about all the technical settings on his camera, but also he needs to manoeuvre his body to the exact position at the given moment, and keep his composure and camera steady in moving water. This is by no means an easy task.

'I've always had a fascination with nature, especially the ocean and its ever-changing forms,' the photographer tells us. 'I am compelled to capture and share what I feel are special and unique moments in the sea. I love the raw, unpredictable nature of water in motion and the way that sunlight brings it all to life, from both above and below the surface.

'For me, the challenge is in creating an image that I hope tells a story or evokes a feeling or emotional response.'

Warren originally comes from a creative music background, and it wasn't until this part of his life changed direction that he found photography. 'I originally purchased my first digital camera (a Canon EOS 5D Mark II) to try my hand at fishing photojournalism,' he says. 'I've always loved being creative, and after photographing landscapes for a couple of years from the land I knew that I needed to be in the ocean.'

After purchasing an underwater housing case, Warren's photography style began to change drastically. 'I had spent my entire life either alongside or within the ocean, so it felt like a natural progression to delve into image making using the sea as a canvas and inspiration. The ocean is full of colour, shapes, symmetry, textures and energy, which I find completely mesmerising. With the use of a digital camera and waterproof housing, I'm able to explore the intricacies and anomalies of these relationships, which often go unseen, translating these visions using various lenses and different techniques into images that I can share with the world.'

On a typical day, Warren will get up before sunrise – a task he admits he doesn't always find easy – and heads to the ocean. 'You go from being a night owl in a band to having to get up at the crack of dawn!' he says. 'Getting up early can be a struggle, but I know I've got to force myself as you never know what's going to happen.' After a couple of hours in the water, Warren then heads to his gallery in Wollongong, New South Wales, which he's had since 2013. 'I'm so lucky to be doing what I'm doing. I get to talk to people and share my experiences every day.'

WARREN'S KIT

Warren's kit bag is bursting to the brim with camera bodies and lenses. His most useful pieces of kit, though, are his DaFiN swim fins, Agent Eighteen Wetsuits, and AquaTech Elite water housing, which keeps his Canon EOS 5D Mark III and Mark IV protected. In his lens collection, as well as the Canon 70-200mm f/2.8L IS II USM lens he also has the Canon 24-70mm f/2.8, Canon 16-35mm f/2.8, Canon 50mm f/1.4 USM, and Canon EF 15mm f/2.8 fisheye lens.

There are many approaches and angles that Warren has experimented with when it comes to capturing the waves. 'If you want to take shore break shots then a wideangle or a fisheye lens is the place to start,' he advises. 'I did that for a few years at my local beaches.' However, it wasn't until the photographer added a telephoto lens to his kit bag that his style began to take on a new form. 'By mixing up the lenses and using a telephoto lens it just completely changes everything,' he explains. 'The perspective shifts, and when I got my 70-200mm I found I was using the lens at 100mm-plus for most of my shots.' Warren finds that the longer lenses work on both large and small waves. 'You can sit back further from the action, yet you can still capture something so intense that it makes you feel like you're right up there.'

As for now, Warren will continue to run his own gallery and keep travelling to exciting places around the world with his photography. 'I'm travelling more frequently in order to experience and photograph different parts of the world's coastline and its many inhabitants, including white sharks, humpback whales, turtles and manta rays, to name a few. The majority of my work and happiness comes from spending hours in the ocean interpreting light and moving water. Shooting the ocean for me is all about the escape, pure and simple. Coming away with an image that I'm happy with is a real bonus.' AP

© DAVE SANDFORD

Warren Keelan

Warren Keelan is a seascape and ocean photographer from New South Wales, Australia, who specialises in wave and underwater photography. His images have been awarded highly in prestigious competitions including the International Landscape Photographer of the Year. Find out more about his work at **www.warrenkeelan.com**

KIT LIST

Lenses

My go-to lenses are the EF 16-35 f/4 and RF 70-200 f/2.8. The wideangle lens is perfect for capturing wider vistas and creating a sense of depth and scale. The RF70-200 f/2.8, on the other hand, is an excellent choice for capturing distant subjects or creating a sense of optical compression.

Gitzo tripod (GK100T)

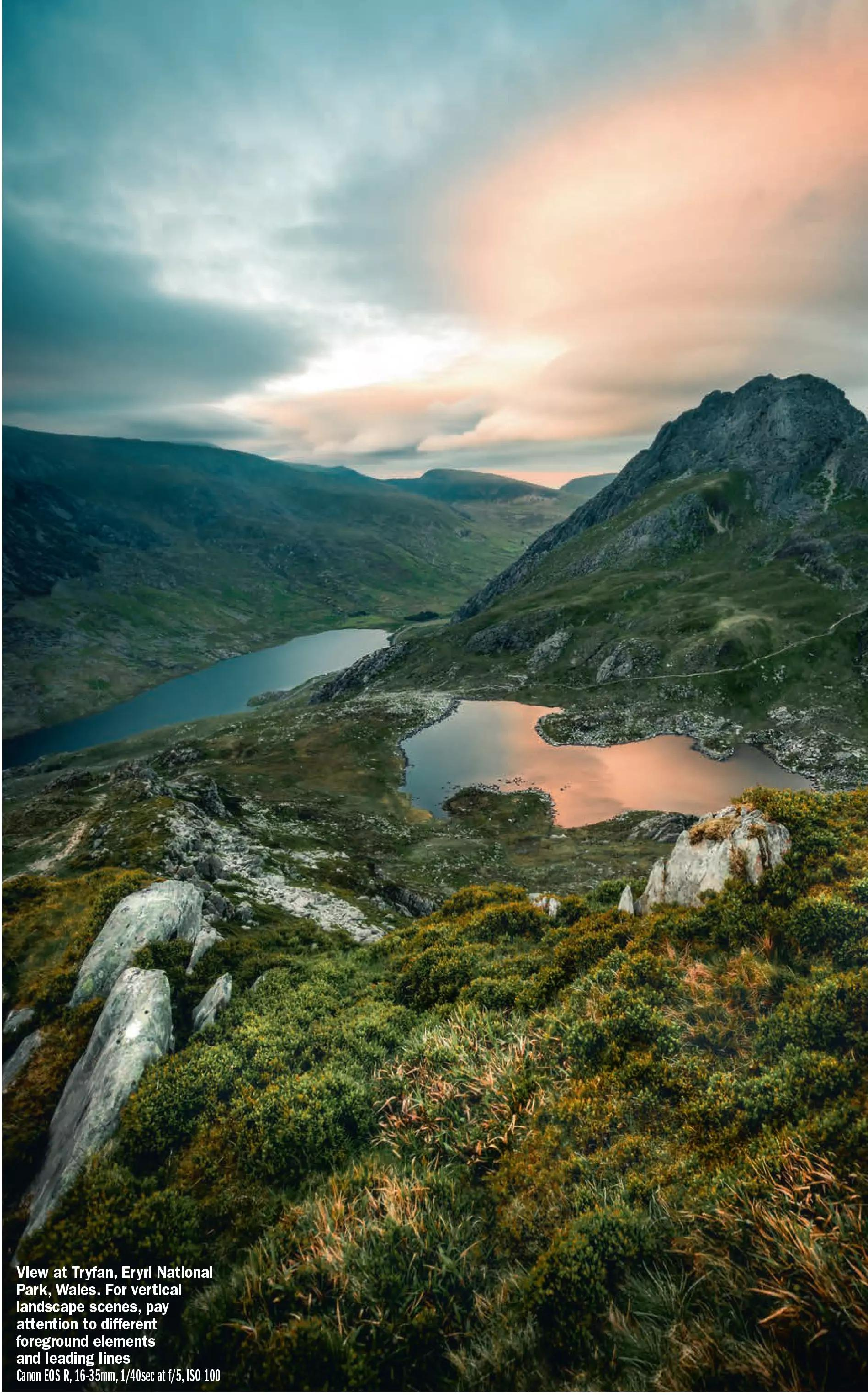
While hiking, having a tripod that is both sturdy and lightweight is crucial to avoid adding unnecessary weight to my already heavy backpack. It is ideal for long-exposure shots, as it helps to eliminate camera shake.

ND filters

I like to have control over the amount of light that enters my camera and ND filters come in handy when I want to capture moving clouds and water. I often use 3, 8, or 10-stop depending on the daylight conditions and what I'm trying to achieve.

PeakDesign clip v3

The camera clip has been a game-changer for me. It's an excellent way to carry my camera when I'm on the move. The clip securely attaches to my backpack strap, giving me quick and easy access to my camera whenever I come across a photo opportunity. I no longer waste time taking off my backpack to access my gear.



View at Tryfan, Eryri National Park, Wales. For vertical landscape scenes, pay attention to different foreground elements and leading lines
Canon EOS R, 16-35mm, 1/40sec at f/5, ISO 100

Change perspective

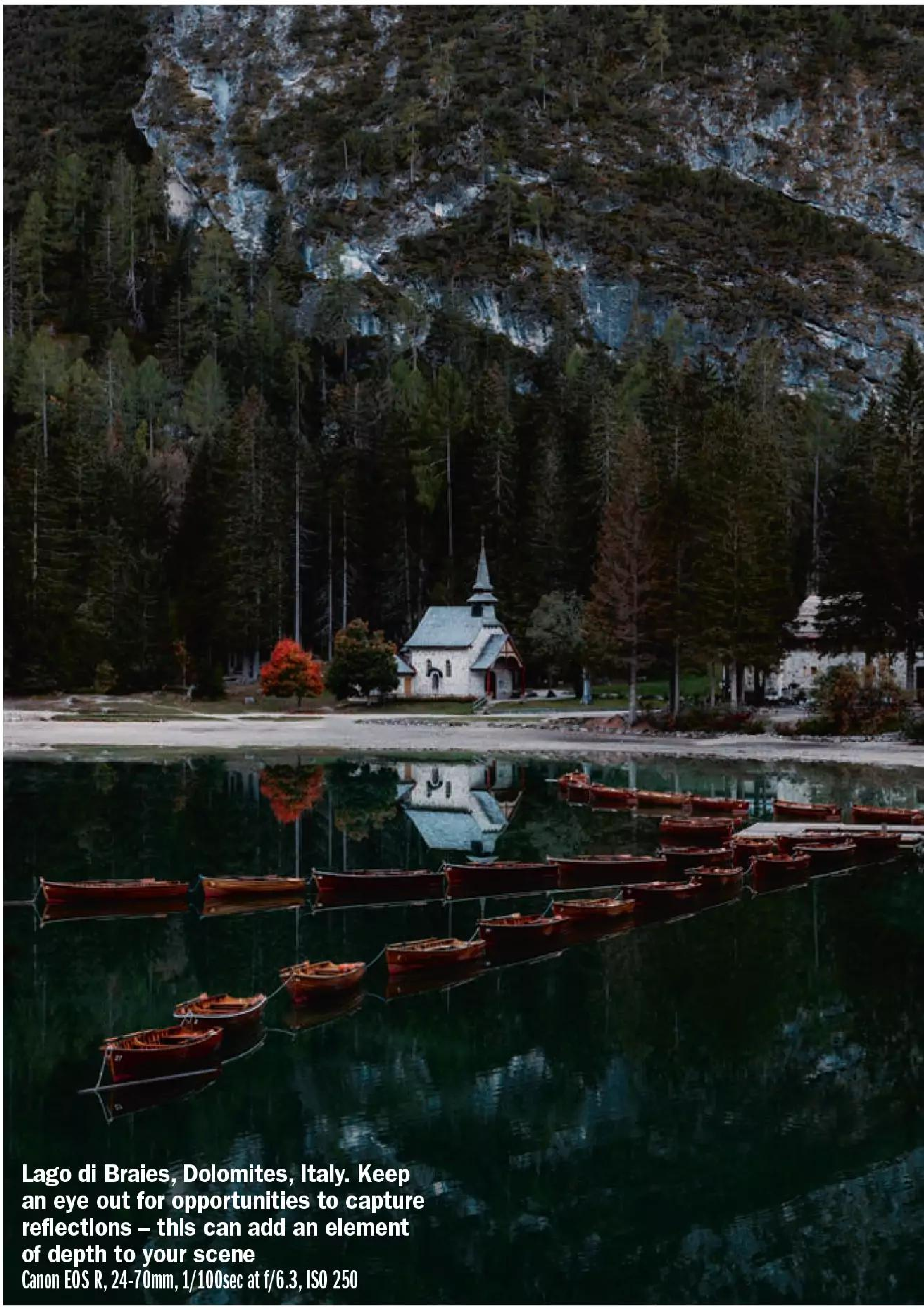
Take a fresh approach with landscapes and see where your vision can take you. **Paulina Stopka** shares her journey on how a different perspective challenged her to view the world in a unique way and create images to be proud of

Paulina Stopka

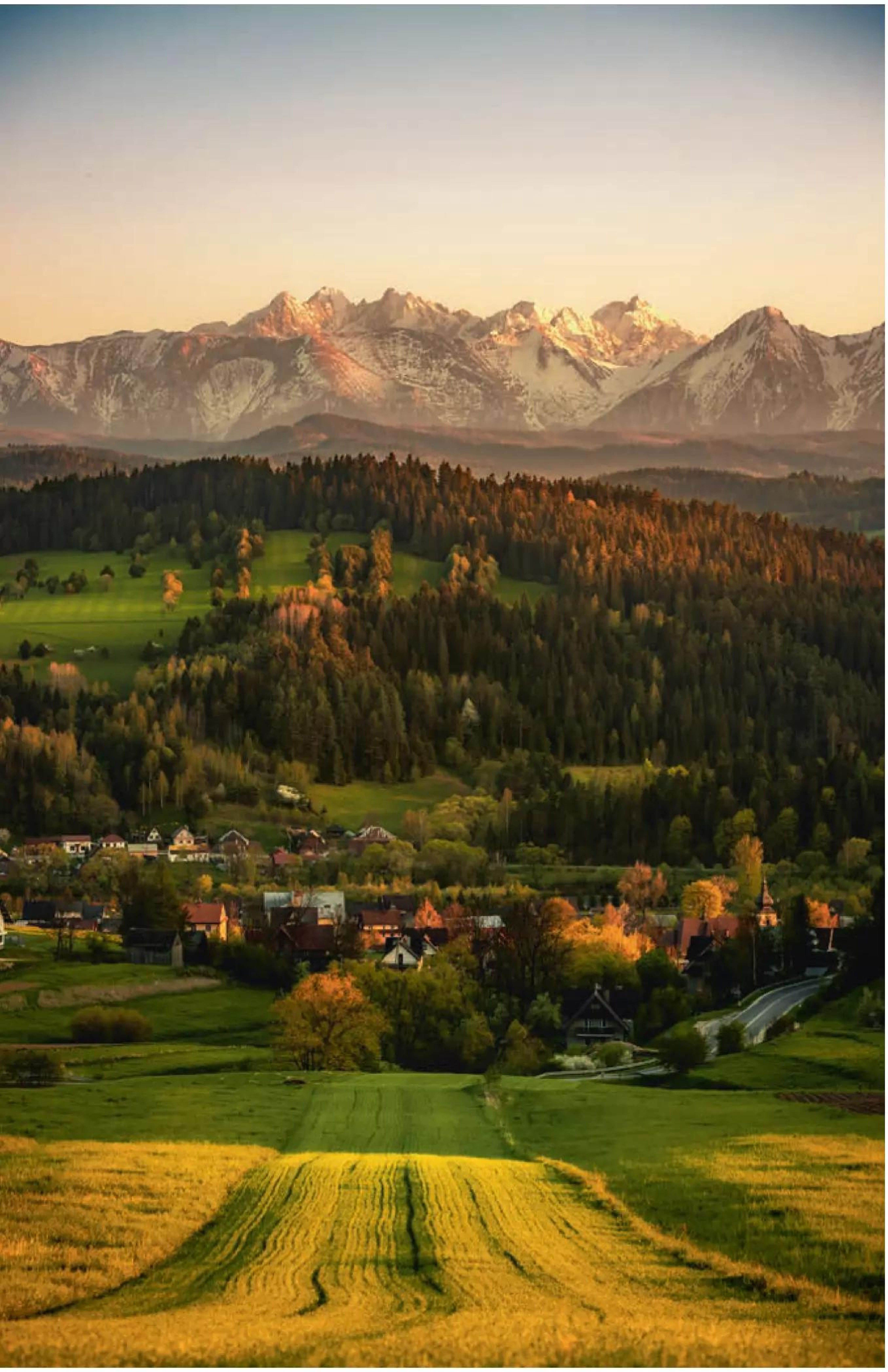
Paulina is a London-based self-taught photographer and graphic designer originally from Kraków, Poland. She began her photography journey in 2016 and specialised in portrait, urban/architecture and landscape photography. She is particularly drawn to symmetry and aesthetics when composing her photos. See more at **www.paulastopka.com** and **Instagram @shotsbypaula**

Growing up in the southern region of Poland, I was fortunate enough to live near the Tatra Mountains, renowned for their stunning alpine landscapes. Although I always enjoyed spending time in the outdoors, hiking was not my cup of tea for a long time. It wasn't until 2016, when I developed an interest in landscape photography, that I became truly inspired and motivated to explore the trails to capture the breathtaking scenery around me. The thrill of not knowing what lay ahead at the summit kept me going, always wondering about the kind of views and sunsets I might encounter.

As I delved deeper into the world of landscape photography, I began experimenting with different angles and compositions. It wasn't long before I discovered that shooting in portrait orientation not only offered a fresher perspective compared to traditional landscape photography, but it also presented a different set of challenges and opportunities that I was eager to tackle.



Lago di Braies, Dolomites, Italy. Keep an eye out for opportunities to capture reflections – this can add an element of depth to your scene
Canon EOS R, 24-70mm, 1/100sec at f/6.3, ISO 250



Left: View of Tatra Mountains, Poland. Always think about the foreground, mid-ground and background elements and how they marry together in a scene when composing
Canon EOS R, 70-200mm, 1/100sec at f/5, ISO 100

Often when we think about landscape photography, our minds imagine photos of vast natural vistas captured in a horizontal format. However, the realm of landscape photography extends far beyond the boundaries of horizontal frames. By exploring new creative opportunities, you can unlock a whole new world of possibilities. So, next time you're out in nature, why not push your boundaries and try experimenting with shooting in a portrait orientation? By breaking away from traditional landscape photography and exploring new angles, you can discover a fresh and unusual perspective that will set your work apart from others.

Pros and cons

One thing I love about shooting vertically is that it gives me the ability to isolate the subject and draw focus to it in my composition while minimising distracting elements from the sides of the frame. However, this approach also presents some challenges. One of the challenges when framing vertically is the narrower field of view, which makes it more difficult to capture the full expanse of the landscape. As a result, you need to be extra mindful when scouting the location and selecting the ideal spot for your photo. It's essential to be intentional and mindful when working in this format, but the results can be truly stunning.

Composition

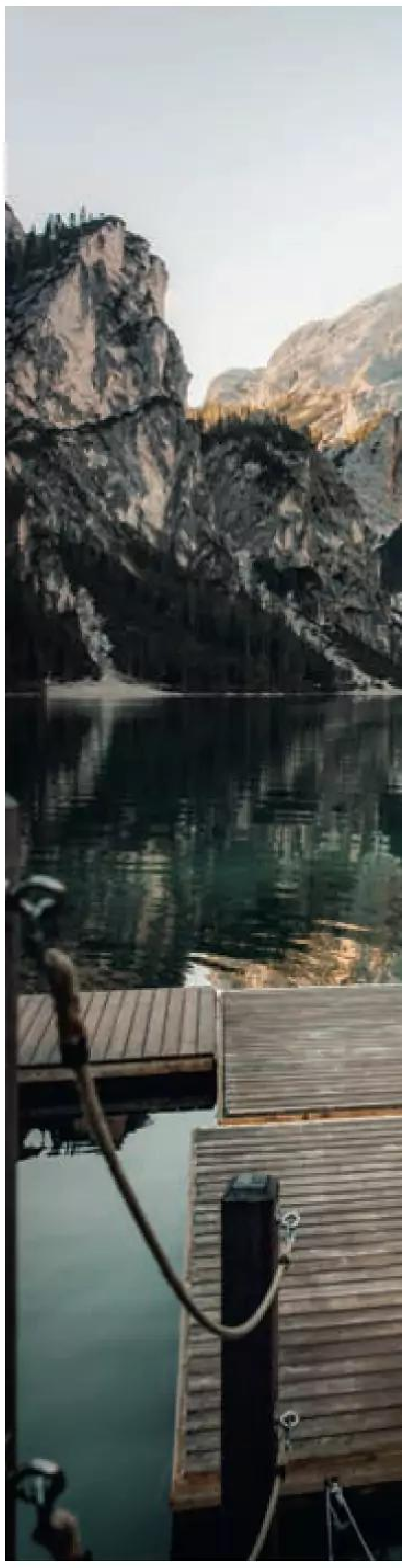
Irrespective of whether you choose to shoot in a horizontal or vertical orientation, it is crucial to ask yourself some questions before pressing the shutter button. Start by asking what you're trying to achieve and what your goal is for the shot. Think about the emotions or story you want to convey and how you can capture it through your composition. Once you have a clear idea of what you're after, experiment with different angles and heights to capture the best view of the scenery, as this can significantly impact the mood and overall feel of the image.

When it comes to composition, my focus is always on symmetry and aesthetics. I find that symmetry creates a sense of harmony and balance in my photos, that is visually pleasing. One technique I enjoy when shooting landscapes is incorporating a person in the far distance, framing them against a vast natural vista. To achieve this, I often use a long lens like a 70-200mm to compress the image, creating a sense of scale and adding a powerful element of storytelling and emotion. It shows how small we are compared to the grandeur of nature.

When it comes to the foreground, it's essential to pay attention to different elements and leading lines. Look for rocks, stones, or flowers in the grass. This can add an interesting depth to your photos and help create more dynamic images, leading the viewer's eye through different layers in your photograph.

Consider also breaking down your image into foreground, mid-ground, and background. For example, try framing your primary subject in the mid-ground and use the foreground to incorporate any elements you see near you; this could be flowers, rocks, or even tree branches. Finally, use the background to showcase mountains or dramatic skies, creating a comprehensive and

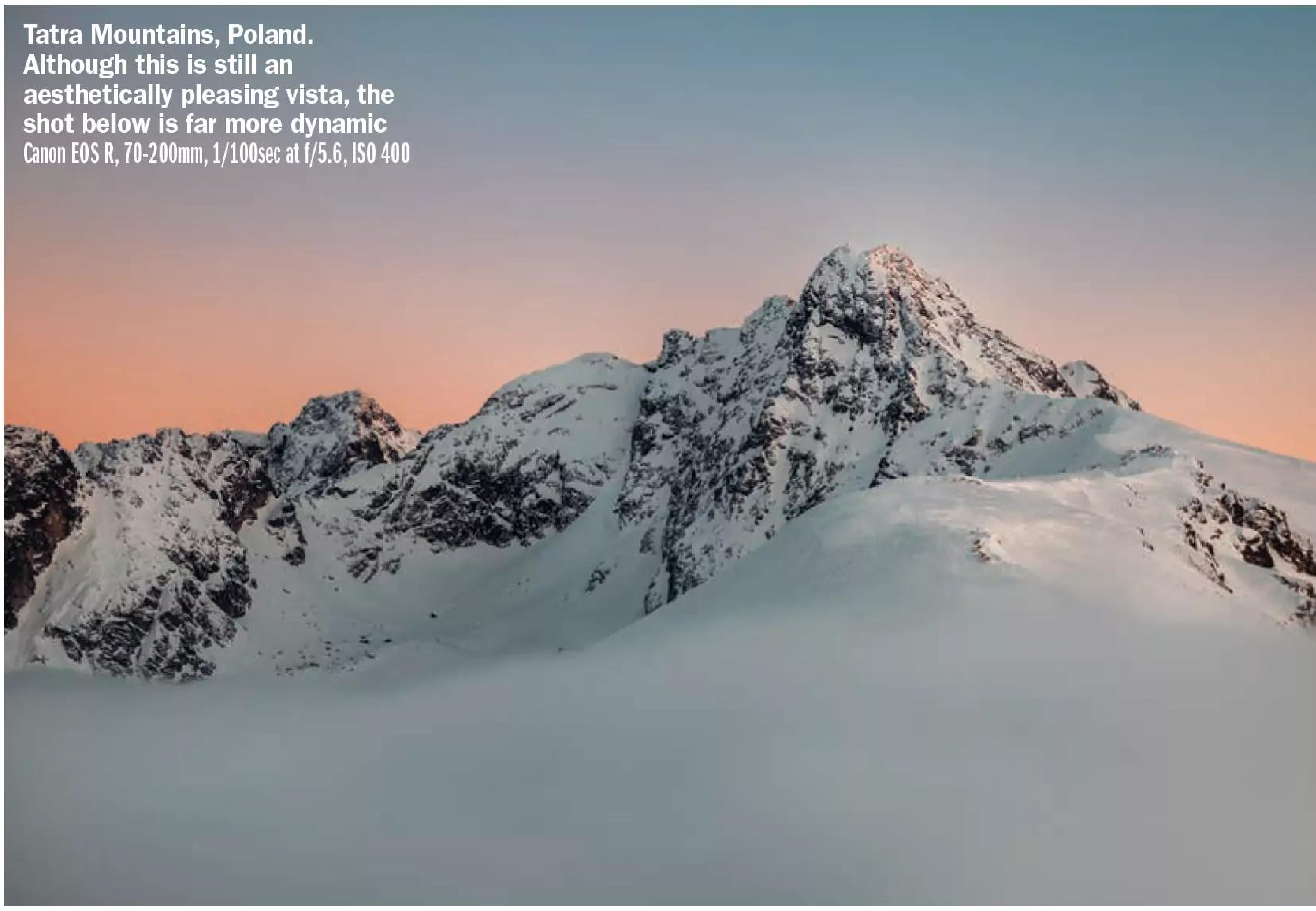
Below: Lago Di Braies, Italy. Placing a person in the scene creates a sense of scale
Canon EOS R, 24-70mm, 1/100sec at f/5.6, ISO 100



stunning image that tells a story.

Another great technique, when shooting in portrait orientation, is using a wideangle lens. For example, let's say you're by a lake surrounded by mountains and the sun is just starting to set. Instead of capturing the panoramic view at eye level, why not position your camera just above the lake level and tilt it down to capture the pebbles in the water to create an interesting foreground? You can also capture the reflection of the mountains in the lake as your mid-ground, while the sunset and mountains serve as your background. This technique can help create a powerful image that immerses the viewer in the experience, making them feel they are right there with you.

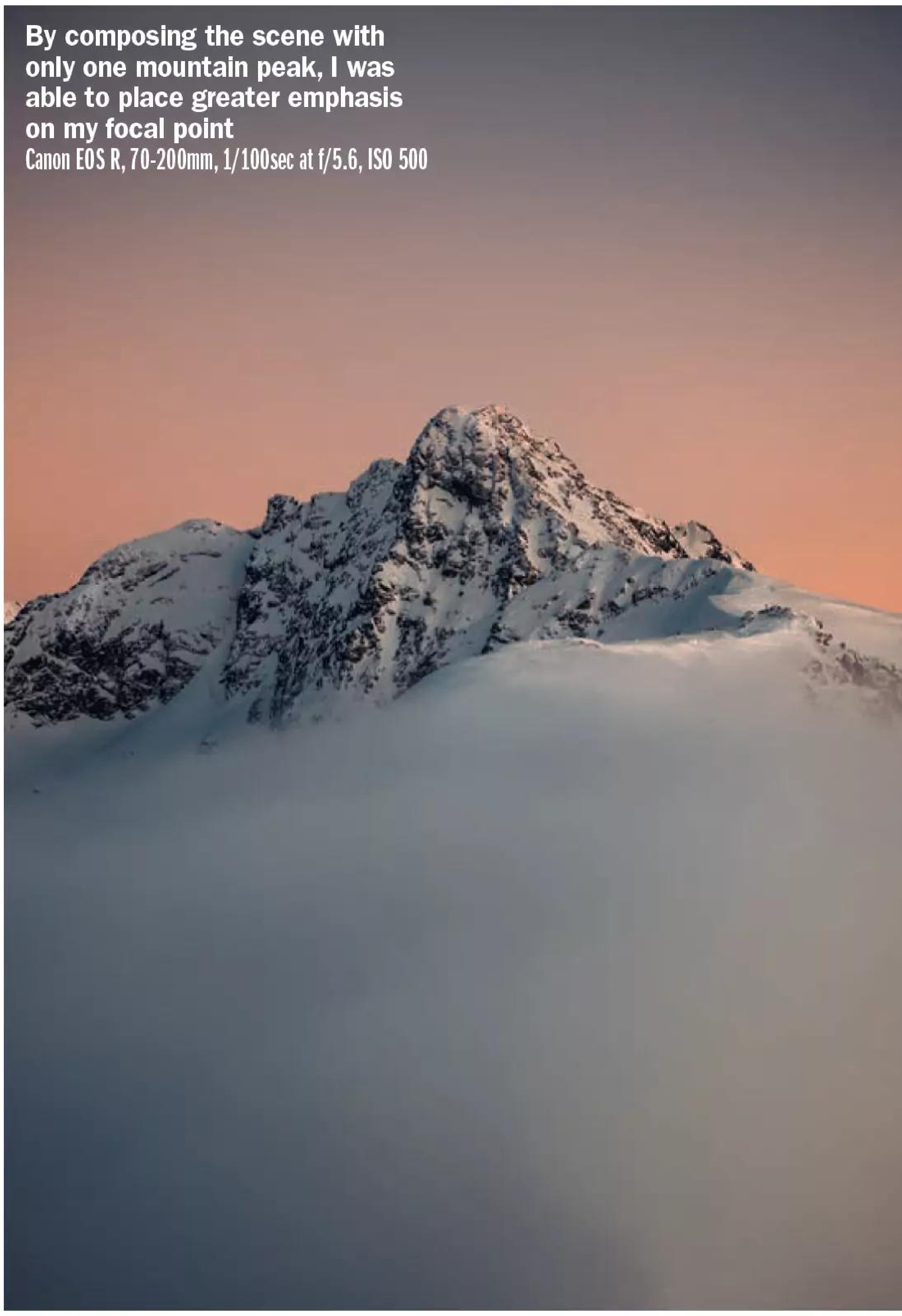
Remember, photography is all about capturing moments and telling stories, and by experimenting with different compositions and orientations, you can elevate your photography to new heights and create images that truly resonate with your audience. So, go grab your camera, head outside and let your creativity run free! AP



Tatra Mountains, Poland. Although this is still an aesthetically pleasing vista, the shot below is far more dynamic
Canon EOS R, 70-200mm, 1/100sec at f/5.6, ISO 400

Why it works

When it comes to landscape photography, there is no hard and fast rule on which orientation to use. The optimal approach will vary based on the circumstances, the subject being photographed and your artistic vision and the message you want to convey through the photo. In this instance, I found that using the portrait format worked much better. By placing only one mountain peak at the centre of my composition, I was able to emphasise its majestic and powerful presence. The sight of the mountain standing alone against the backdrop of the sky evokes a sense of wonder, and appreciation for the raw and untamed beauty of nature, while the stunning cloud inversion only adds to its mystique. My goal was to capture the emotions I felt at that moment and create a personal connection between the viewer and the mountain. Using portrait orientation allowed me to create a more intimate and personal image that conveyed the sense of awe and wonder that I experienced. This could not be achieved using a horizontal orientation.



By composing the scene with only one mountain peak, I was able to place greater emphasis on my focal point
Canon EOS R, 70-200mm, 1/100sec at f/5.6, ISO 500

ORDER FORM

☐ **UK DIRECT DEBIT** (13 issues) for £26 – saving 70%*

☐ **UK CREDIT/DEBIT CARD** (26 issues) £69.99 – saving 61%*

For international offers, visit shop.kelsey.co.uk/APUG24

YOUR DETAILS

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms Forename

Surname

Address

Postcode/Zip code

Country

Mobile

Email

IF DELIVERY ADDRESS IS DIFFERENT, COMPLETE BELOW

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms Forename

Surname

Address

Postcode/Zip code

Country

Mobile

Email

We may wish to contact you regarding our special offers that we believe would be relevant to you. Please tick the boxes below to tell us all the ways you would prefer not to hear from us. ☐ Email ☐ Post ☐ Phone ☐ Text message**. We will not pass your details on to third party companies.

PAY BY DIRECT DEBIT

☐ **I wish to subscribe by Direct Debit payments of £26 for my first 13 issues. I understand that my subscription will continue at the rate of £34.99, with payments taken every 3 months – unless I write to you to tell you otherwise.**

DIRECT Debit

Instruction to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit

Name of Bank

Address

Postcode

Account Name

Sort Code

Acc. No

Signature

Date

Originator's ID number

837383

Direct Debits from the account detailed in this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with Kelsey Publishing Ltd and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank or Building Society.

PAY BY CHEQUE / DEBIT / CREDIT CARD

☐ **UK CREDIT/DEBIT CARD (26 issues) £69.99 - saving 61%***

☐ **Please debit my:** ☐ Visa ☐ Visa Debit ☐ Mastercard

Card no

Security no

Valid from /

Expiry date /

Signature

Date

☐ I enclose a cheque for £69.99 made payable to Kelsey Publishing Limited (must be from a UK bank account. Please write your name and address on the back of the cheque).

(UK ONLY) PLEASE SEND COMPLETED FORM TO:
FREEPOST KELSEY MEDIA

Lines are open Mon-Fri 8.30am to 5.30pm. Calls are charged at your standard network rate. *Offers available for UK customer s only. You will pay £26 for your first 13 issues, then continue to pay £34.99 every 3 months. Savings are calculated based on the Basic Annual Rate using the standard cover price plus standard postage price per issue. **Offer ends 31/12/25**. Prices correct at time of print and subject to change. For full terms and conditions visit shop.kelsey.co.uk /terms. To see how we use your data view our privacy policy here shop.kelsey.co.uk /privacy-policy.
**You may unsubscribe at any time

APUG24

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear reader,

Looking to improve your photography? ***Amateur Photographer*** is the magazine for you, so subscribe today and pay just £26 for your first 13 issues! You will be joining our community and enjoy convenient home delivery every week plus you will receive our free weekly newsletter. ***Amateur Photographer*** is the perfect read for both amateur and professional photo-enthusiasts providing news, reviews and advice to help improve your skills..

Nigel Atherton, *Editor*

Join us and enjoy these great benefits:

- Every issue **delivered directly to your door**
- **Save up to 70%** on your first 13 issues
- Guarantee you **never miss an issue**
- Receive the ***Amateur Photographer*** newsletter every week**
- **One FREE entry** per round into ***Amateur Photographer*** of the Year Competition
- **Additional PREMIUM content** every 4 weeks at no extra cost

Amateur Photographer

SUBSCRIPTION OFFER

Improve your photography

with a subscription to *Amateur Photographer* magazine!

Tuesday 23 April 2024
Amateur Photographer
Best vintage digital cameras
Finest older compacts for £50 or less – and yes, they still take good photographs
Passionate about photography since 1884
Wild at heart
How to take winning wildlife shots
Essential tips for doing well in wildlife competitions and taking your bird and animal shots to a new level
Celebrating Salgado
Peter Dench and an expert panel on why he's so revered
Shooting artwork
Turn photographs of art into your own masterpieces
Ultimate buying guide to mirrorless lenses: find the best

SAVE UP TO 70%*

JUST £2 PER ISSUE

IN EVERY ISSUE

NEWS

REVIEWS

INSPIRATION

FEATURES

ADVICE & TUITION

3 EASY WAYS TO SUBSCRIBE

Visit **shop.kelsey.co.uk/APUG24**

Call us on **01959 543 747** and quote **APUG24**

Complete **FREEPOST** coupon

SCAN ME

Lines are open Mon-Fri 8.30am to 5.30pm. Calls are charged at your standard network rate.

KIT LIST

▲ Cable remote

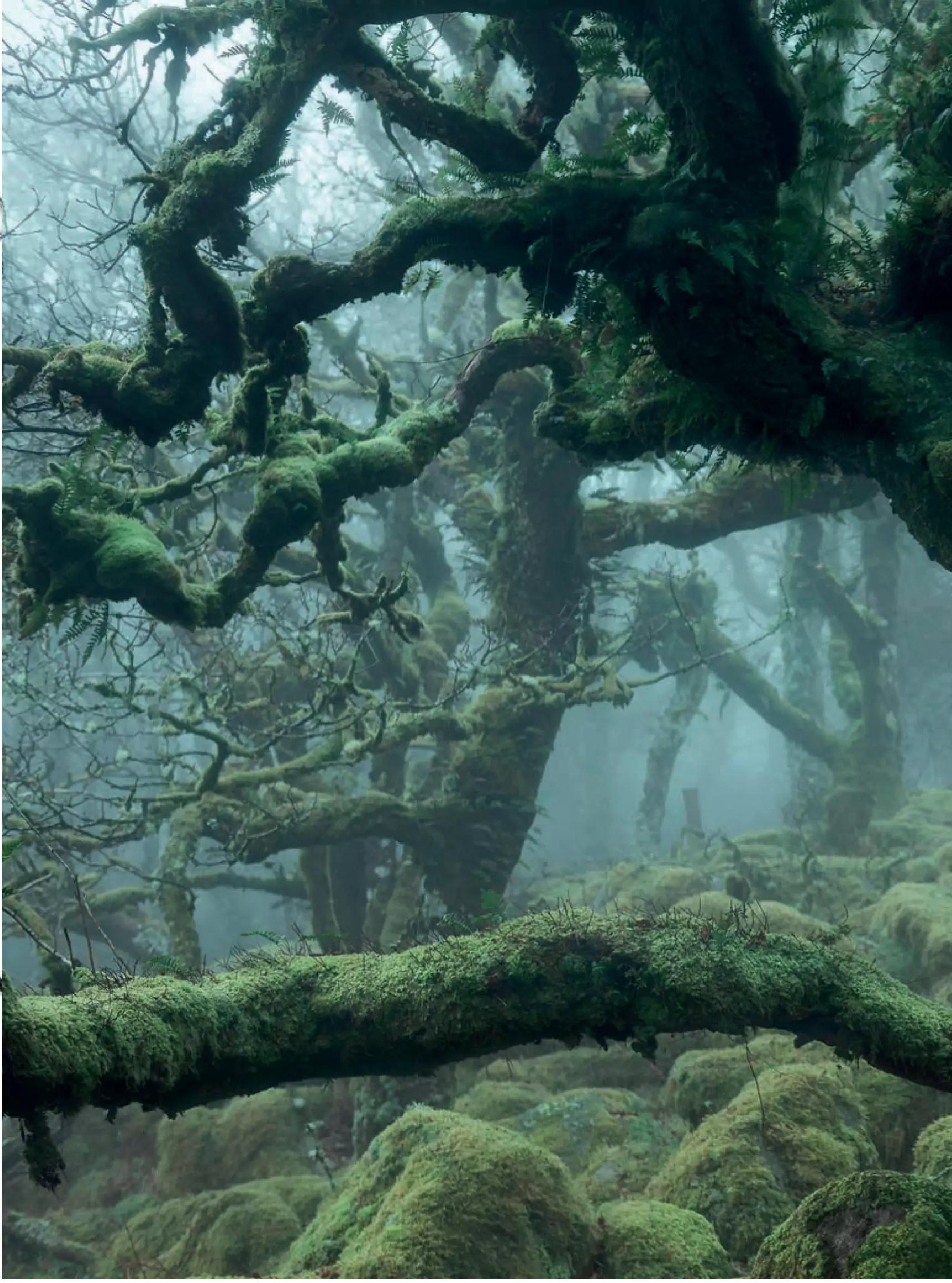
You'll often shoot moody images in darker conditions, so shutter speeds can be a few seconds. A remote will help eliminate any shake; the other option is to use the timer on your camera.

▲ Polariser

Wet leaves and damp tree bark can often cause distracting highlights even in the softest light. Controlling the highlights is made easy by using a rotating polariser – a great accessory when shooting moody woodland.

▲ Tripod

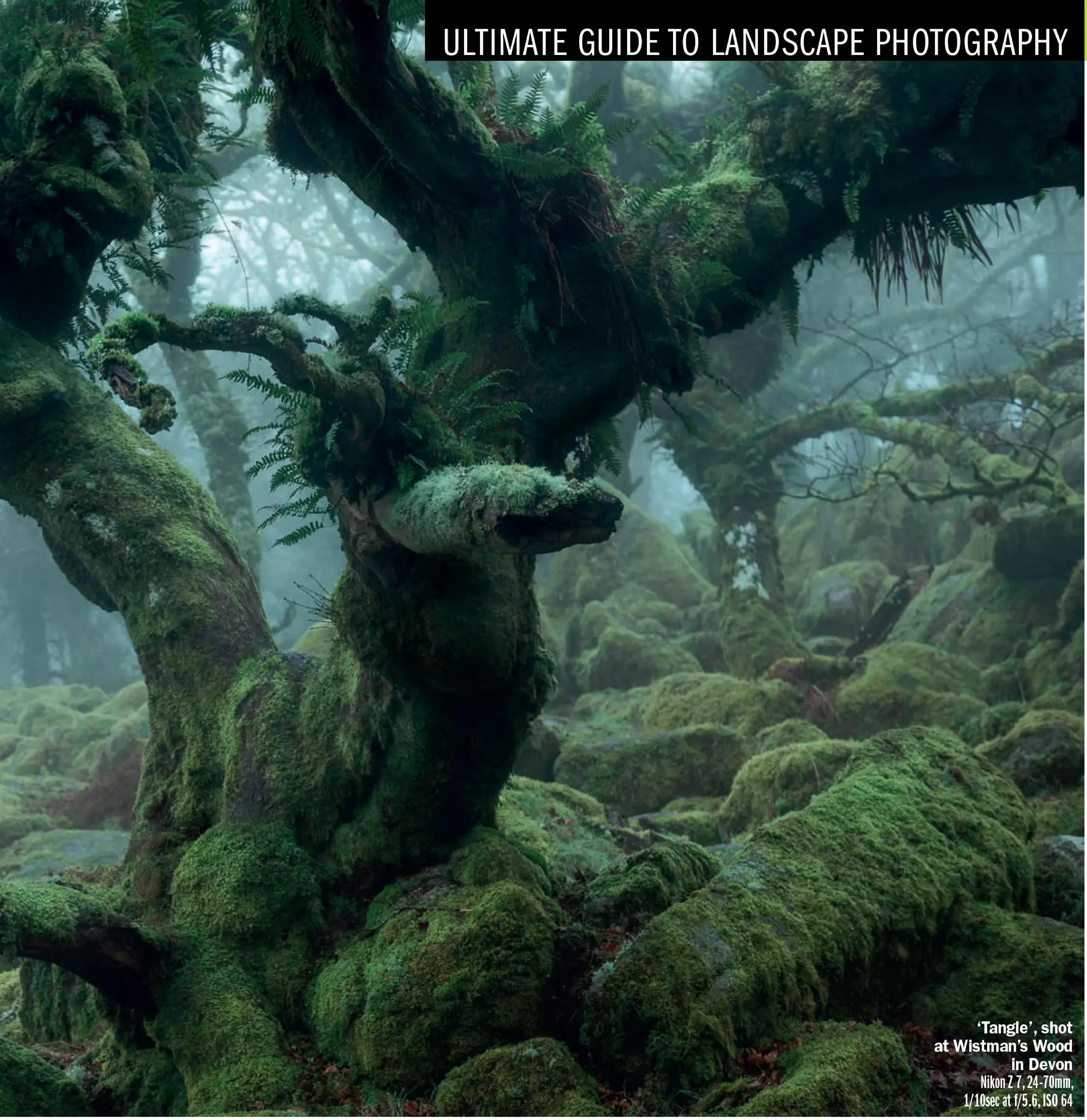
Keeping your camera stable while shooting longer exposures in near-dark conditions is a necessity. I use a tripod that can extend to my own eye level and can also be adjusted to shoot only inches from the ground. This helps me shoot at any angle.



ALL PICTURES © NEIL BURNELL

Moody winter woodlands

Creating images full of mood and atmosphere takes a keen eye and an ability to see order in chaos, as **Neil Burnell** explains



'Tangle', shot at Wistman's Wood in Devon
Nikon Z 7, 24-70mm, 1/10sec at f/5.6, ISO 64

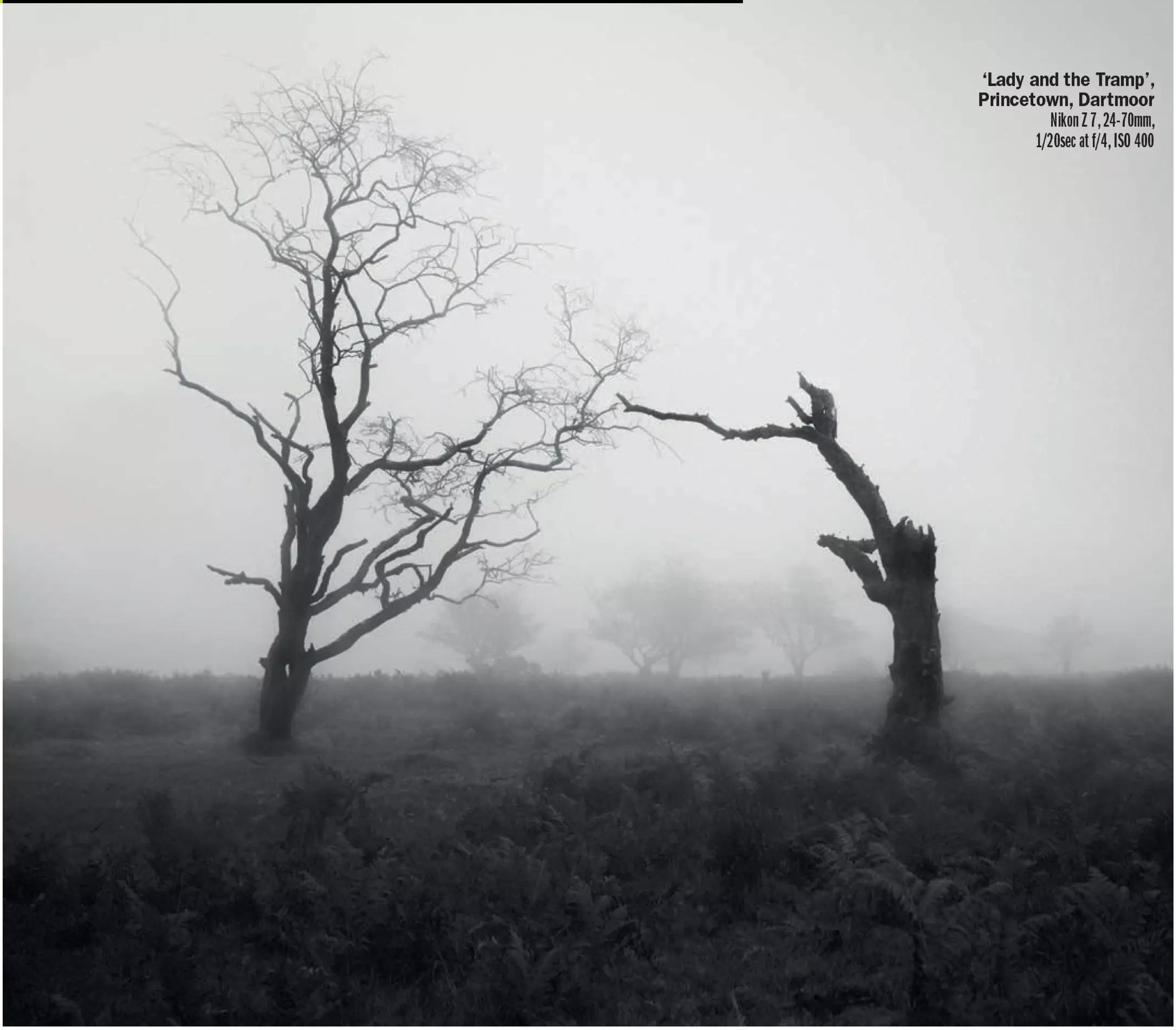
While many landscape photographers are drawn to shooting sunsets and sunrises with drama, light and colour, I've always derived more enjoyment from shooting in conditions more suited to atmospheric scenes. Woodland can be a daunting genre for many photographers who are led to believe that it's an extremely difficult subject to master. While I agree it's not an easy subject, I'd also say that all genres are difficult if you don't put the time and effort into them. I've found woodland to be an enjoying challenge and extremely satisfying when it all comes together.

Rise to the challenge

To begin with, woodland can be a bit overwhelming: tangled trees seem like a complete mess and it's hard to make sense of it all let alone take an image. Almost certainly the best place to start your woodland journey is by going on a few scouting missions – try keeping it local if you can. Travel light and go with no expectations and I can almost guarantee you will find some scenes with potential that you can return to. Work the edges of the woodland first. Looking into a woodland can often reap rewards and is an easier way to spot compositions, especially if you haven't shot this genre before.

Neil Burnell

Neil Burnell is a multi-award-winning photographer from Devon. He studied art and photography at college in the early 1990s and pursued a career in graphic design and marketing. Since around 2014 Neil rediscovered his passion for photography and is particularly drawn to atmospheric landscape, woodland and seascape scenes. Visit **www.neilburnell.com**



'Lady and the Tramp', Princetown, Dartmoor
Nikon Z 7, 24-70mm, 1/20sec at f/4, ISO 400

NEIL'S TOP TIPS

Simplifying a scene

I've learnt from trial and error that certain elements within a scene will only cause distraction. I avoid large gaps in the tree canvas, which can often be very contrasty even in good conditions. Venturing out in thick fog or mist is the easiest way to isolate a subject, and it's often easier to find isolated trees on the edges of the woodland.

Shoot what you see

This sounds obvious, but sometimes woodland photography can be very overwhelming, and often we can be too picky when looking for a perfect scene. Sometimes it's best to stop and pay more attention to your surroundings, looking for light and shapes then studying various other angles before discounting scenes. Keep an open mind.

Blue-hour shooting

The soft light at the blue hour is my favourite time of day. While I can appreciate some people prefer the golden hour for shooting, I'd advise those people to go out a little earlier and try shooting when light starts to break through. The subtle light of the blue hour really can be magical in a woodland. Combine it with some mist or fog and you're on to a winner!

‘If you want that atmosphere, make sure you head out on misty days’

Heading straight into a woodland can often be very overwhelming. Once you’ve found a scene, make sure you give it time by checking out various angles and taking reference shots, so you are fully prepared when the conditions are right.

When you first start shooting woodland, don’t expect to shoot keepers from day one. Yes it can happen, as in every genre, but I almost guarantee that it will take some time and several outings for your confidence to grow first.

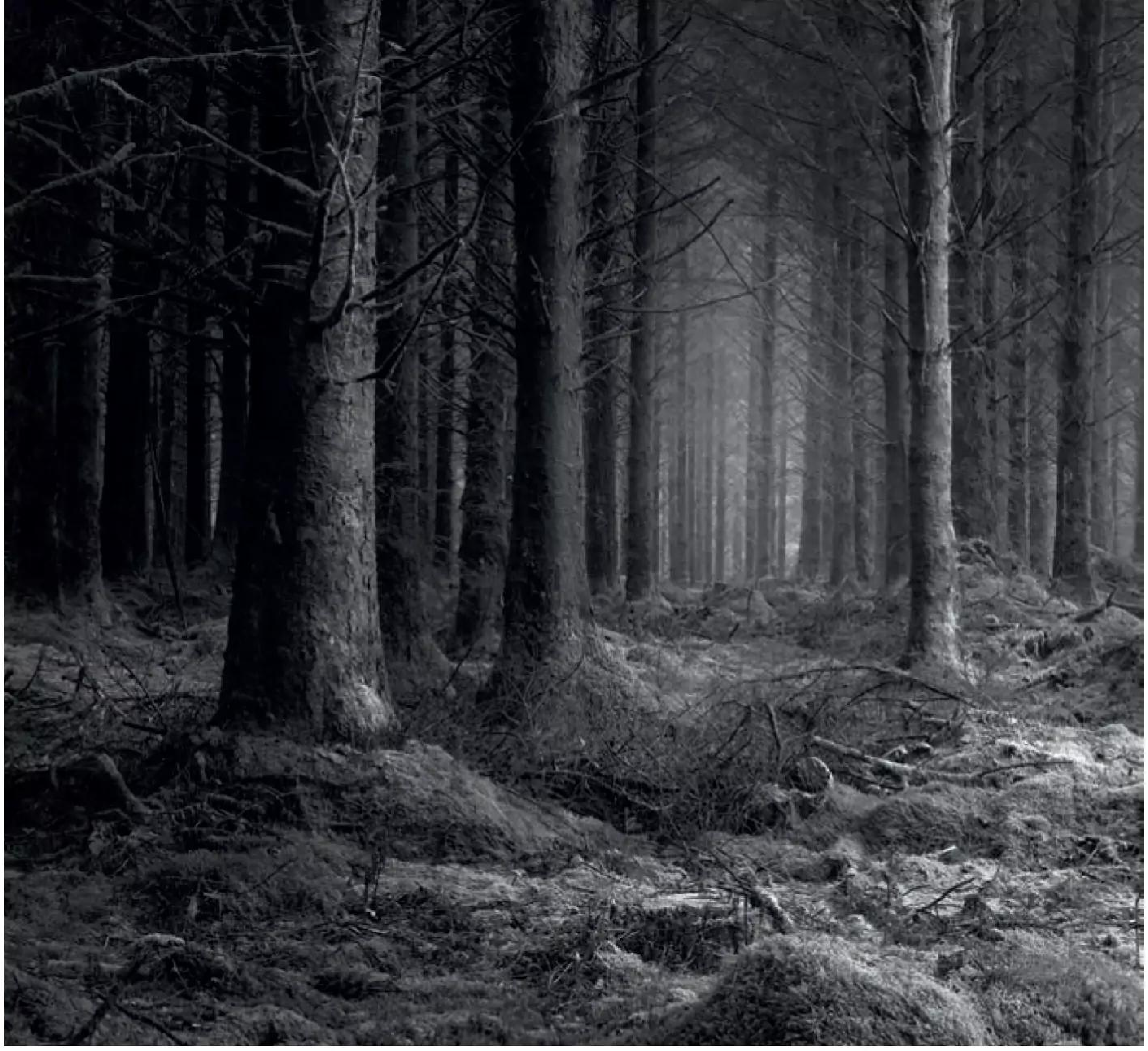
Check weather conditions

It’s fairly obvious, but fog or mist are an essential ingredient in the majority of my atmospheric woodland images. These conditions are not only essential to create mood, but they also help dramatically when it comes to picking out compositions and isolating subjects of interest. The time of day is also a key ingredient. For my own images, I prefer the softer muted light of blue hour, especially when the objective is mood.

Of course, there are other ways of isolating subjects, like using fast lenses wide open to create a shallow depth of field, but if you want that atmosphere, make sure you head out on those misty days.

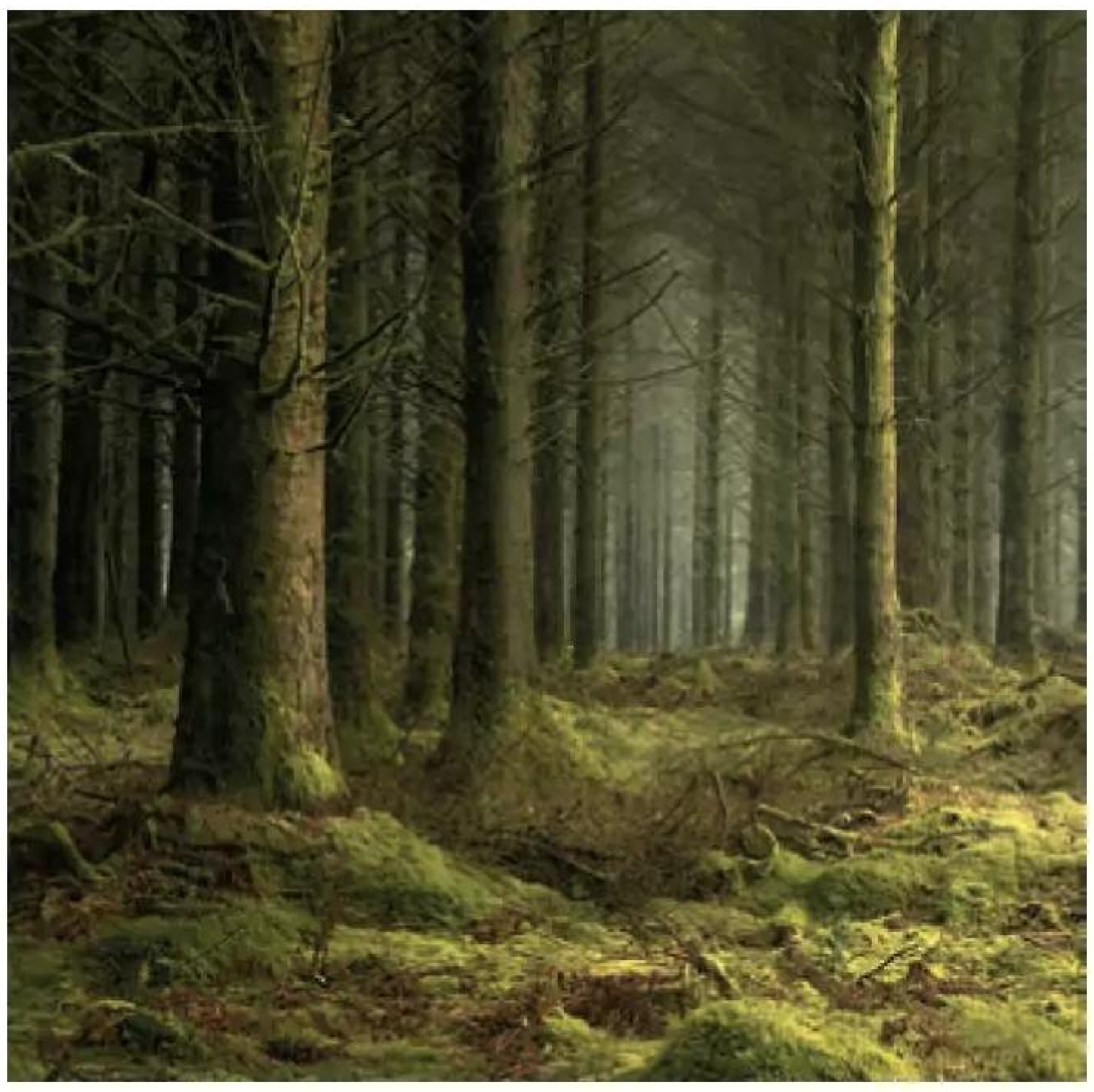
Research locations

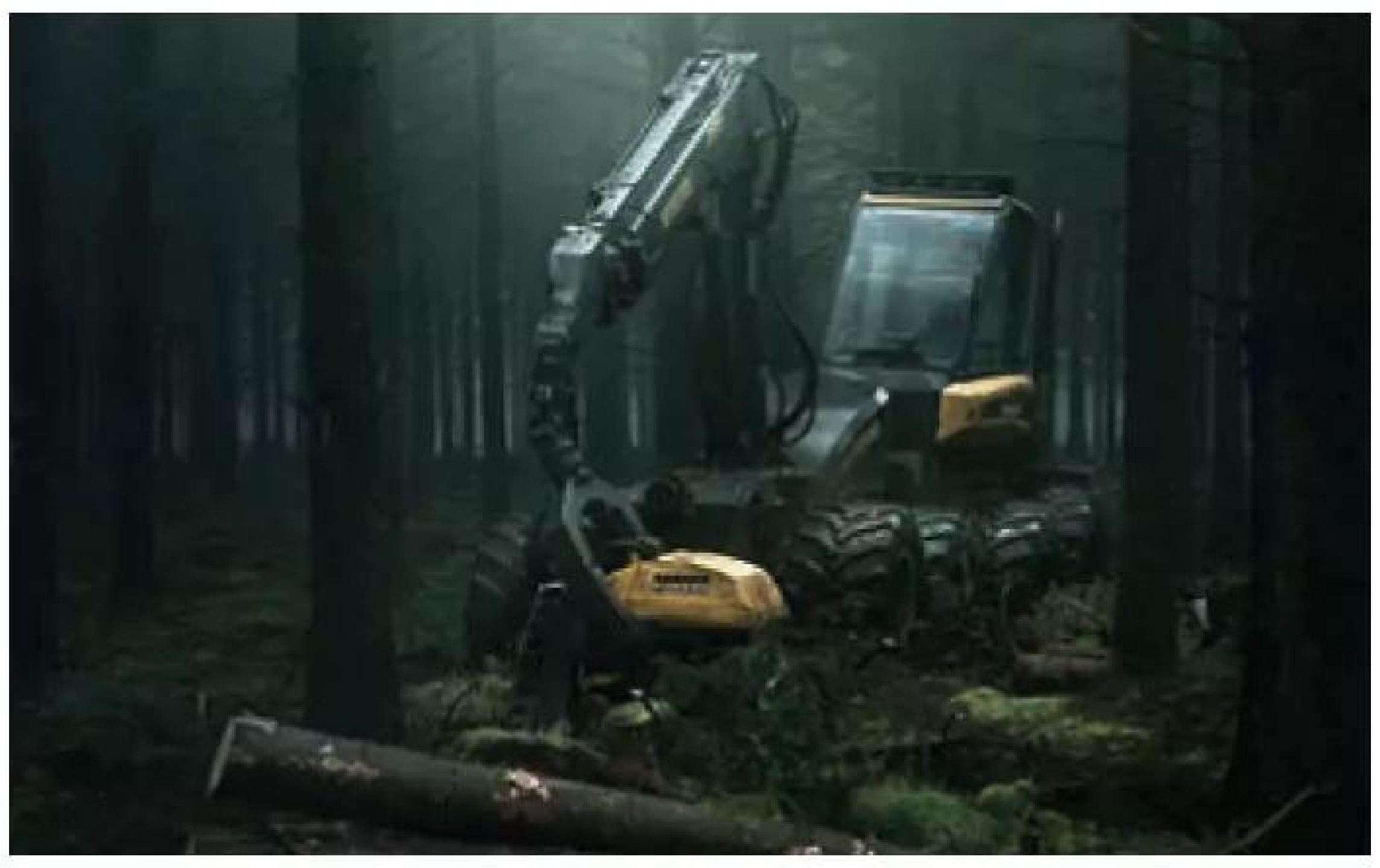
There are several places I enjoy shooting and exploring when I want to try and create atmospheric images. The first is Wistman’s Wood in Devon. It’s an amazing location and one that every photographer who likes to shoot



Why it works

‘Follow the Light’ was shot near Pixie Land in a small pine woodland as the mist was clearing. The light at the time was coming from my right-hand side and it really did bring the scene to life. I’m particularly pleased with the composition of this image and how the light and soft mist create depth and a clear passage to guide the viewer’s eye through. In my opinion, both the colour and black & white work particularly well for this image which isn’t always the case. Having said that, I’d slightly favour the monochrome – I just feel the textures and tones in the mono really draw you into the frame.





Find a focal point

It’s quite common to find a different-shaped tree or even a different species of tree that breaks the uniformity that surrounds it. There are also other elements that can work in a woodland scene – maybe the placement of a lone figure or a man-made element. This forestry logging machine in a woodland on Dartmoor made a great subject.

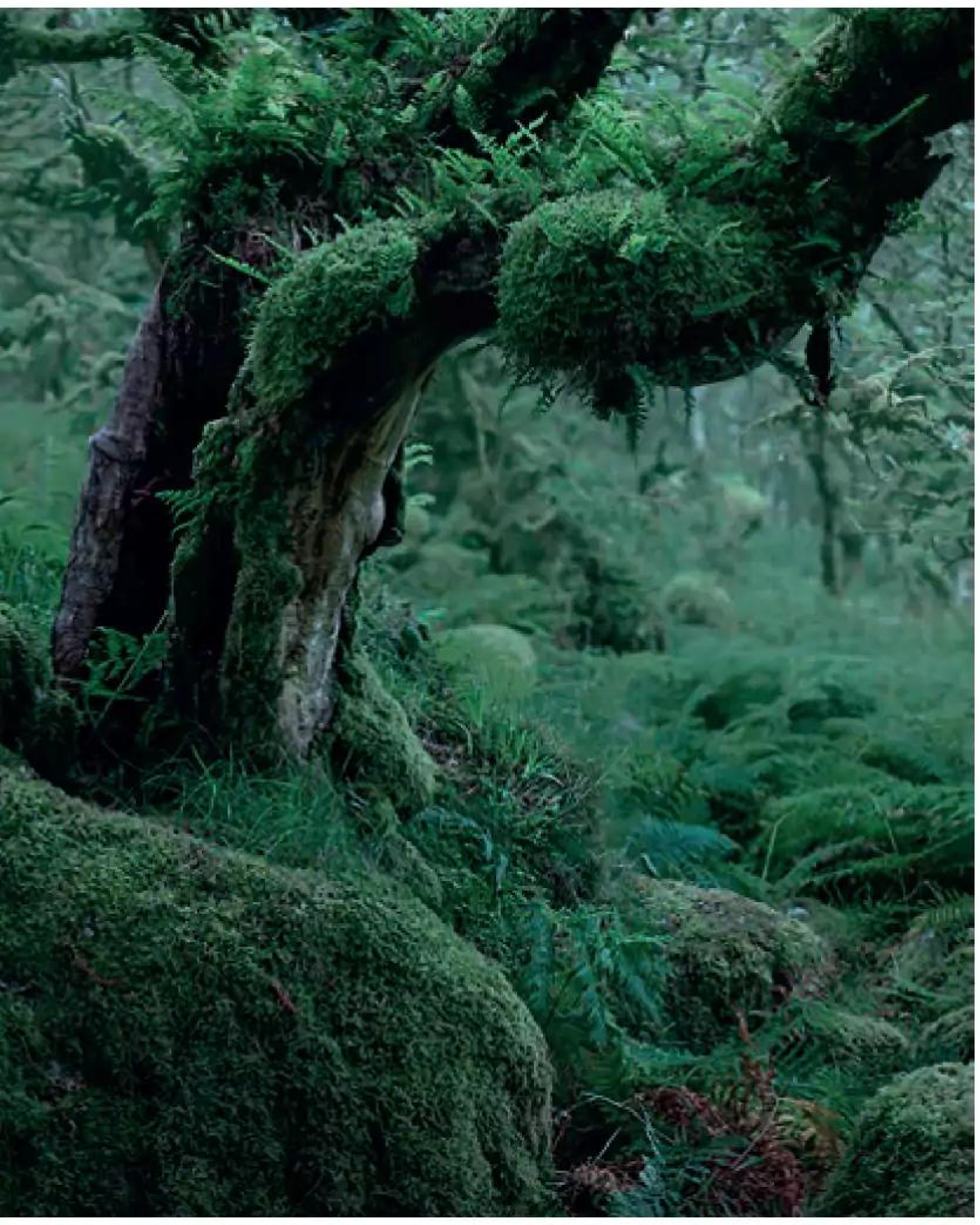
Imperfections

When I shoot woodland, I’m not looking to get a clean sharp image over 100% of the frame. Often imperfections, higher ISO (grain/noise) and shallow depth of field can add to the mystery and mood of a photograph, in my opinion. I shot this scene with various different apertures but settled on the slightly softer look of shooting wide open.

Small scenes

Sometimes it’s best to look beyond a full scene at the closer details. Using a slightly longer prime lens and using the viewfinder to look around a scene can often help when I struggle to find wider landscape shots. Taking this approach can often help to focus in the details and eliminate the distractions that can often be prevalent in larger scenes.

‘Over the past two to three years my processing style has changed dramatically’



‘Split’, shot in Wistman’s Wood, Devon. This was a stacked image of six shots
Nikon Z 7, 50mm, 1/100sec at f/2, ISO 64

woodland should visit at least once. It’s a very small woodland and can be extremely difficult to shoot and negotiate your way around, but if you get lucky with the conditions, it really is a magical place. The second spot is Haldon Forest in Devon – a place I’m only just finding my way round. It has massive potential and I’m hopeful I will shoot some keepers there this year. The woodland itself has an abundance of various species from gnarly oak to silver birch, providing great variety and endless opportunities for photography. Another great Devon location is Churston Woods. There are a few small woodlands close to my home and on the rare occasion there is fog locally I will head to Churston Woods. There are also some nice trees on the local golf course, which I have shot in some thick fog, after seeking permission from one of the greenkeepers.

Shooting and processing

My typical woodland set-up has recently changed, as I’ve collected a few old Nikkor AIS lenses. I currently use a Nikon Z 7 and FTZ adapter with 50mm f/1.2 AIS, 85mm f/2 AIS, 105mm f/2.5 AIS and 135mm f/2.8 AIS lenses; a 3 Legged Thing Winston tripod with Zelda L-Bracket; another 3 Legged Thing tripod; Vanguard Alta Sky 51D bag; Kase Polariser; and Nikon cable release.

When it comes to processing, we all have our own style. Over the past two to three years my processing style has changed dramatically, as I’ve been inspired by various photographers. For me, the most important thing is to experiment and get a feel for the type of image I want to create, using the sliders to see how they affect an image. Don’t be scared to push the colours in a direction that suits your tastes.

As my Mystical series was all shot during the blue hour, I really wanted to emphasise that soft blue light. I did this by using a mixture of tweaking the Colour temperature and Split tones. I’ve also added a fair bit of noise to the images, which were originally shot between 100-800 ISO – this is just something I liked at the time as I felt it added to the mood of the image. Finally, I flattened the tones slightly using curves and desaturated. I feel the end results really represent how I visualised the scenes in my mind when I was there shooting.

‘Organisation’, shot at Churston Golf Club
Nikon Z 7, 24-70mm, 1/25sec at f/4, ISO 64

'Hope', also shot in Wistman's Wood
Nikon Z 7, 24-70mm, 1/250sec at f/9, ISO 250

Neil Burnell's simple steps

Scout your area

It's often best to scout a location several times before taking your full bag of equipment.

On the outside

Resist the temptation to walk straight into a woodland. It's often easier to spot scenes or areas of interest while looking into the woodland from the outside.

Take your time

Shooting woodland can be daunting, so don't rush straight in. It will take time to get your eye in so walk slowly and enjoy your surroundings.

Be inspired

I often look for inspiration and enjoy viewing images from masterful photographers I follow on social media. There are so many talented UK landscape photographers who shoot beautiful woodland scenes.

Know the direction of the light

Even with flat light or mist I find it useful to know where the light is coming from when I shoot a particular scene I've scouted. I tend to prefer shooting in a backlit scene or with sidelight for increased drama.

Compose your scene

Don't just look with your eyes; sometimes it's also a good idea to look through the viewfinder. Even if you're not sure of a scene there's sometimes something there when viewed through the camera.

Lens choice

I've found shooting with a focal length between 35mm and 100mm to be most common within my photographs. I often walk around with a 24-70mm, but I very rarely shoot wider than 35mm.

Get out there and try

Many people avoid woodland because they have been led to believe that it's one of the more difficult landscape genres. I, for one, have embraced the challenge over the past few years and have found it to be very enjoyable and rewarding.

Experiment with processing

Over the years I've learnt Lightroom and Photoshop by experimenting! It's important to create your own vision in photography, and through years of watching countless YouTube tutorials and experimenting I am more confident in producing an image I envisaged from the shoot. Split toning is a great place to start, but don't be scared to use the HSL colour sliders and really experiment until you reach your own vision.

Stay safe

Try going to a new woodland with a friend or tell people where you're going.

A changing landscape

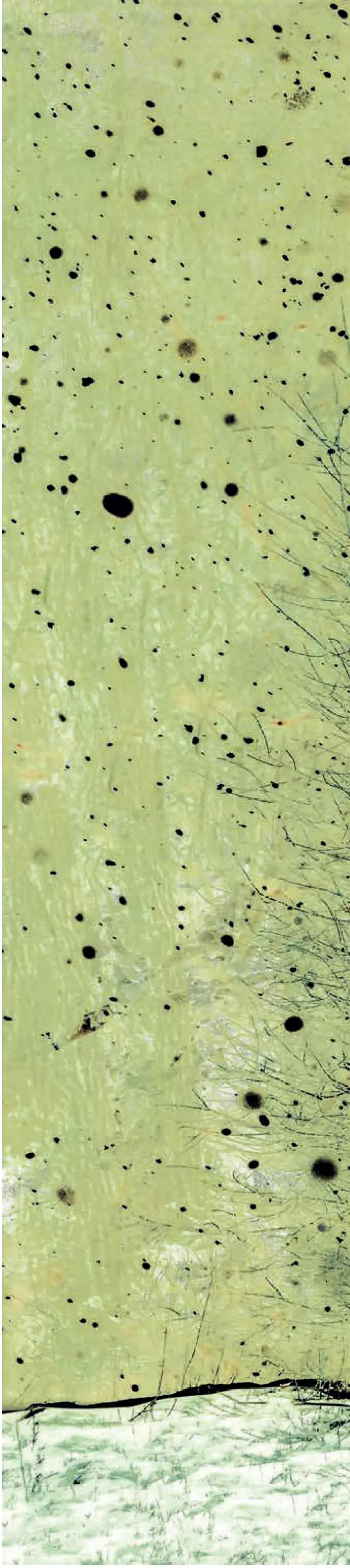
Traditional landscape photography is being taken over by more experimental forms. **Keith Wilson** talks to four photographers who are pushing the limits

What a view! Tripod out, camera and lens on. Wide angle. Frame and compose. Look for lead-in lines, a focal point. Rule of thirds. Is the horizon straight? Focus. Stop down to f/16. Depth-of-field preview check. Meter highlights and shadows. Better add an ND grad. What about a polariser? Meter again, check focus. Remote release on. Ready?

Most readers will recognise the above as the litany of the landscape photographer, one that has been astutely observed since a tripod was first planted into the chalk cliffs overlooking Durdle Door or the limestone pavements above Malham Cove. Iconic viewpoints such as these have inspired tons of photographers, but despite all the pretty postcards, comforting calendars and workshop bookings, a wind of change is stirring on the misty dawn horizon of the traditional landscape photograph.

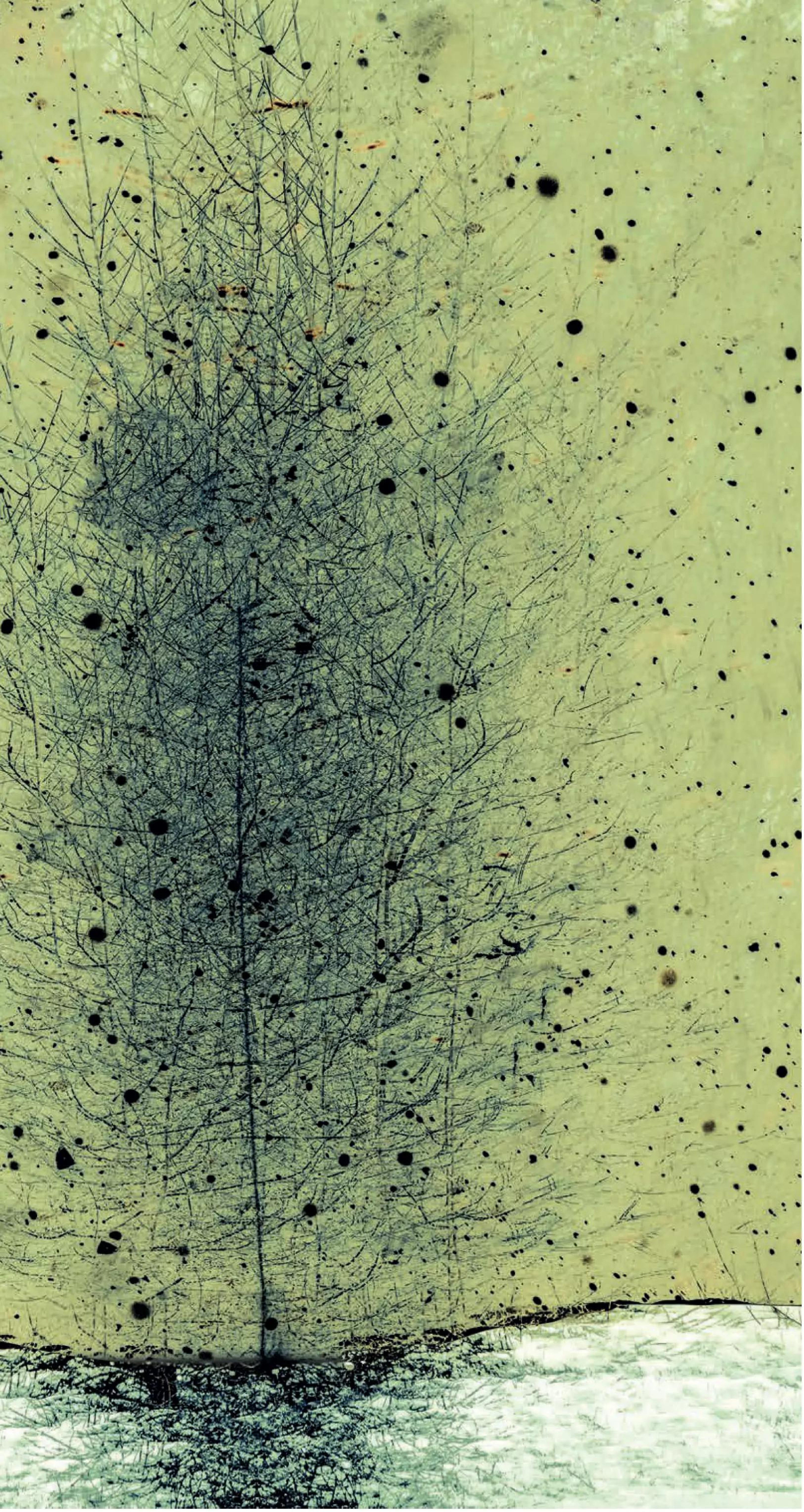
Along with her business partner Doug Chinnery, Valda Bailey is recognised as one of the leading advocates of a new style of landscape photography that is gaining a rapid following for its pursuit of a more conceptual interpretation of our surroundings. Multiple exposures, intentional camera movements (ICM), and using camera blend modes to layer a succession of exposures onto one frame are some of her favoured techniques. Formerly a painter, Valda remembers all too well the frustration of her own beginnings in photography, composing views of Britain's 'honeypot' locations. 'There are a thousand images of Durdle Door and there are going to be plenty of people who have done it

Right: Taken from Valda Bailey's critically acclaimed book, *Fragile*, an emotive interpretation of the most fragile elements in the landscape



© VALDA BAILEY

Left: Many of Valda Bailey's landscapes are layers of multiple exposures. Creative decisions are instinctive, 'so you can't write a recipe for it', she says



© VALDA BAILEY

better than you,' she says. 'When I went down that road I thought, "What is the point? What am I trying to say? I'm not saying anything about me, I'm just capturing what's in front of me."' Nonetheless, she is respectful of the need to attempt images made before: 'Even as a painter you try to emulate the masters just to learn and hone your own technique.'

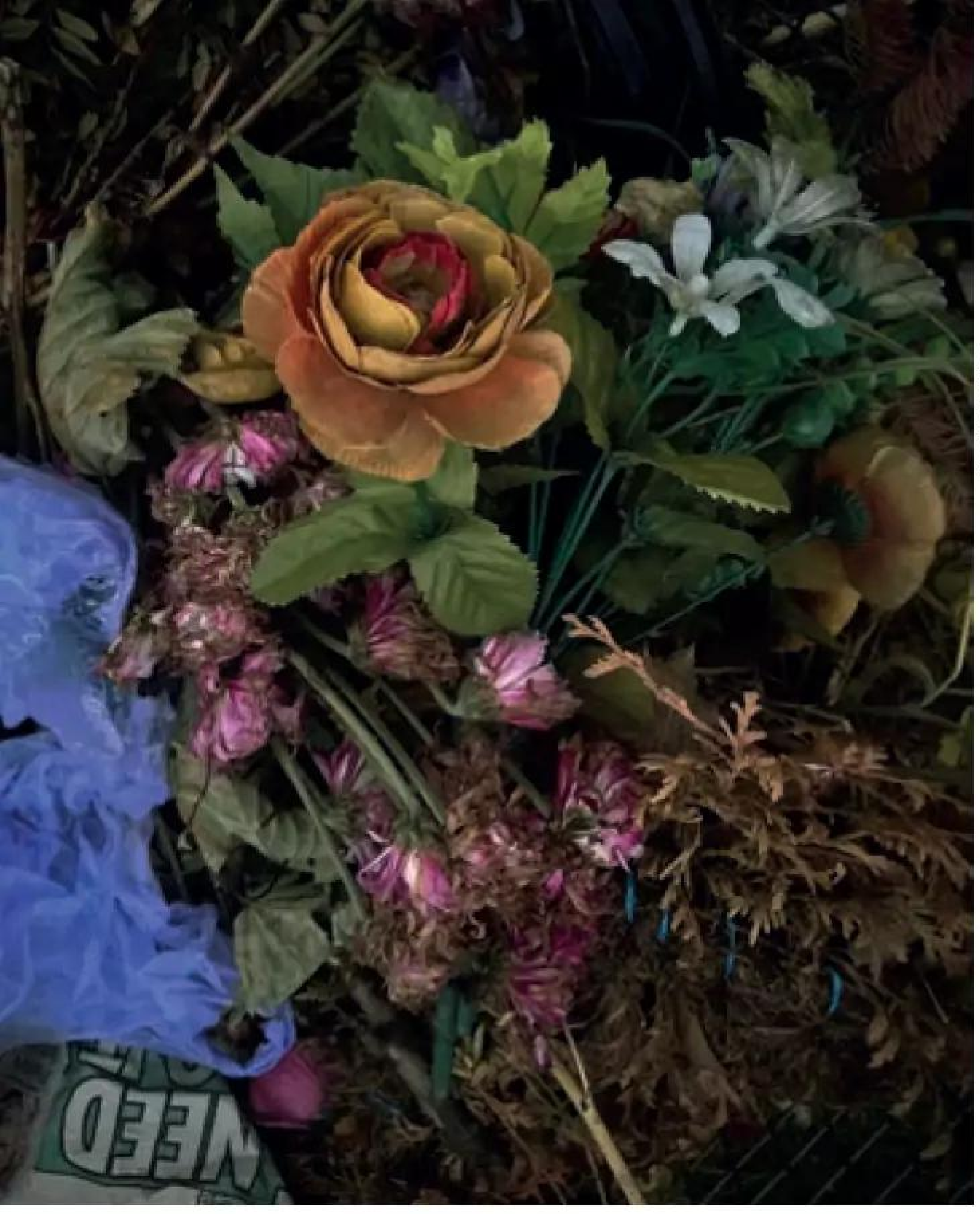
Tin cans and cemetery bins

So, if not Durdle Door at f/22, then what? For Sheffield-based Al Brydon, photographing the landscape might begin with a walk in the Peak District and a backpack filled with tin cans. These are his cameras, each one crudely customised with a pinhole half-way up and a piece of 5x7in darkroom paper placed inside. 'The whole thing is then taped up so no additional light can enter,' he says, 'then it is placed outside for months.' The resulting images are solargraphs, which is also the title of his latest book. However, publication was far from Al's mind when he gaffer-taped his first tin can to a tree over six years ago.

'It was never meant to be a body of work,' he explains. 'One of my friends made one and suggested I give it a go, which I duly did. It wasn't anything conscious – the only stipulation was that it was somewhere I wanted to be. But it was a really good excuse to go out into the landscape and place them where you want.' In all, he left more than 100 tin-can pinhole cameras dotted around various locations, some for over a year.

Al describes his approach to photography as serendipitous and *Solargraphs* owes much to chance, being a collection of images borne more by the seasonal vagaries of light, damp and weather than by his initial choice of location. 'Part of the enjoyment was going back trying to find them! The landscape can change dramatically in that time. If you go out in winter and come back in summer, it's completely different. Sometimes the paper would rot. After a while moisture forms in the can so the paper essentially decays and you get these bizarre dripping marks, mould and fungus.'

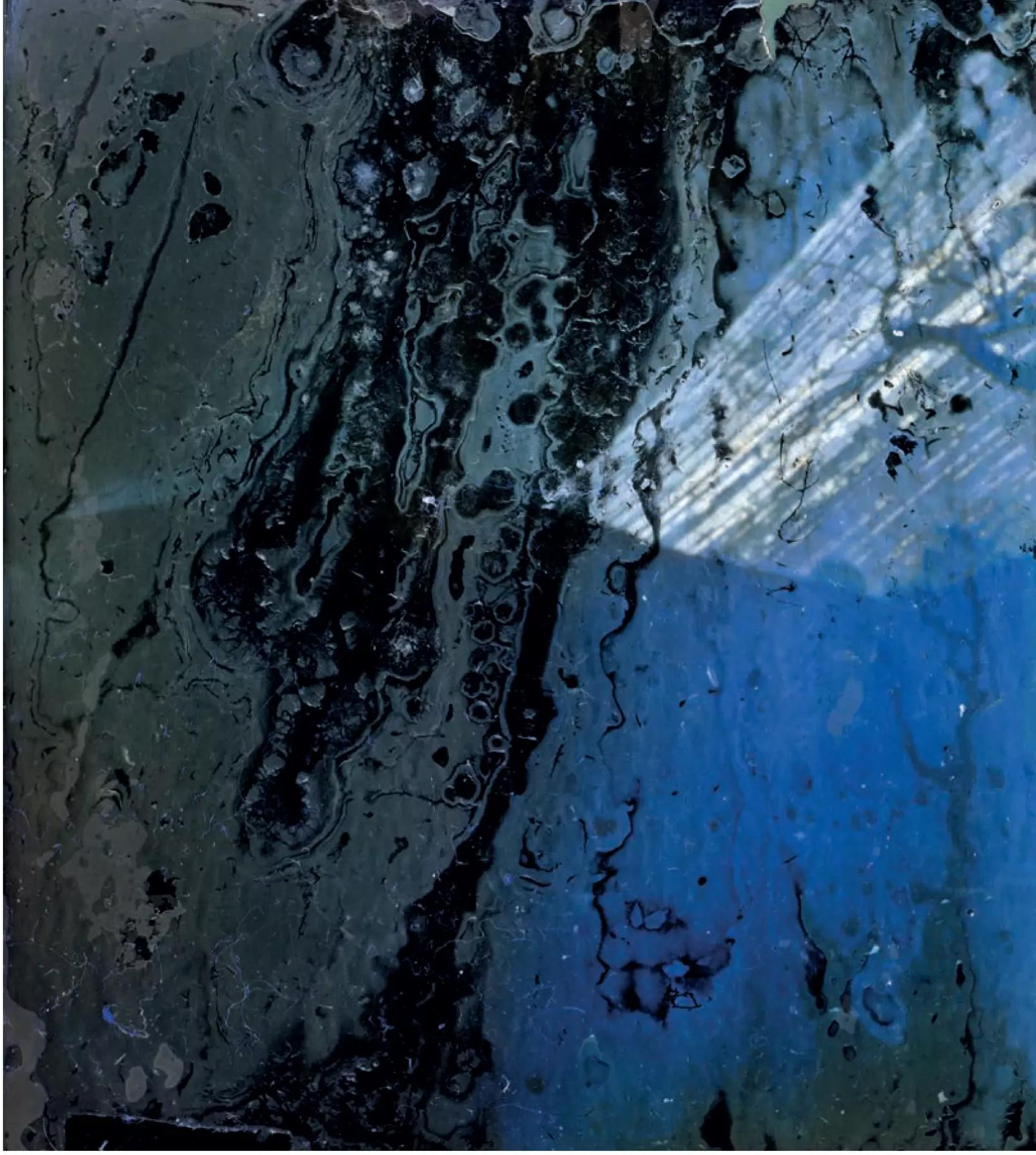
Far less random is his ongoing series, 'Cemetery Bins.



© AL BRYDON

Discarded flowers in cemetery bins inspired Al Brydon to explore mortality

The Graveyard's Graveyard'. Unlike the months-long exposures of *Solargraphs*, these images were taken in a millisecond on 'a nearly dead, old Nokia mobile phone'. Again, this was a project 'that was never meant to be anything; it was just something I enjoyed doing.' The idea came about as he walked his son to school every morning, their route taking them through a windswept graveyard 'blasted by all the weather from the Peak District'. Here, his curiosity was drawn to the plastic flowers discarded in the cemetery bins. 'These flowers have been blown around for years and I just enjoy that weathered effect. They no longer represent the relative's love for the deceased, so they're put into the bin,' he muses. 'Looking at the bins, it teaches something about your own mortality, I think. It just interested me as a concept so I started photographing in earnest.'



© AL BRYDON

Instinctive responses

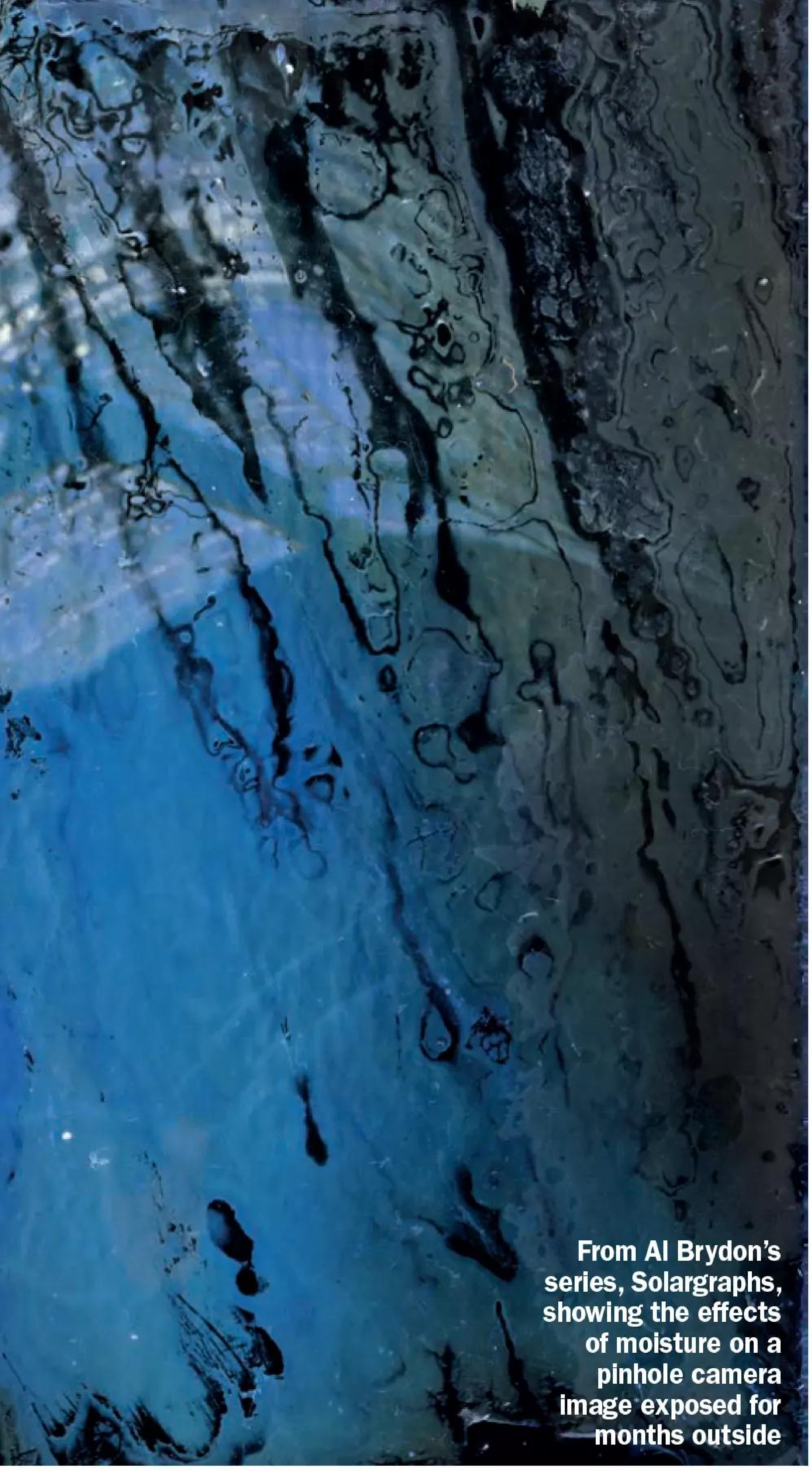
Al Brydon's work may be far from traditional 'calendar landscape' photography, but it is no less relevant to the genre, because the images represent the artist's response to his surroundings. 'You're trying to make your own interpretation that can't be copied by anyone just by turning up,' he says. Like Valda, he is led more by instinct and emotional response than a compulsion to repeat what has been done before. Speaking from a photography workshop in Bilbao, Spain, Valda explains: 'It's not prescriptive what we do. We're making images using multiple exposures and each time you put down an image you have to ask questions. "Does it work? Why doesn't it work?" Each decision that you make about the settings employed for any given image in the sequence is dictated by what the last image has given you, so you can't write a recipe for it. It is instinctive in that way, and you must have a curiosity and imagination and certainly no fear of failure.'

Instinct and imagination are important factors contributing to the methodology of Ted Leeming and Morag Paterson, the landscape and fine-art photographers whose latest work formed part of an exhibition, 'Pennies from Heaven?' in Dumfries, Scotland. The culmination of a Creative Scotland-funded residency programme called Energise, the couple experimented with a multitude of photographic techniques and processes, sometimes as a spontaneous response to what was immediately at hand. The creation of Morag's giant installation, The Watershed, a cyanotype map of the waterways of the Galloway glens, was a prime example. 'There was acetate lying around, black Sharpie markers and I found myself tracing all the waterways out for the region,' she explains. The cyanotype process was one that had always intrigued her, but the opportunity to create such an image hadn't arisen until the residency. She continues: 'I wasn't strictly using photography because I didn't use digital negatives, I was actually hand drawing and tracing all the elements and using direct objects placed onto sensitised paper and fabric.' Like the veins of a leaf, the white tracings of the water-catchment area against the dark blue folds of fabric mimic a satellite image of this corner of Scotland.

- Bailey & Chinnery Photography: Seeking the Unseen. **baileychinnery.com**
- *Solargraphs* by Al Brydon, JW Editions, £30, 104 pages, hardback, ISBN 978-0-9930892-2-0. **www.al-brydon.com**
- To see more work by Ted Leeming and Morag Paterson, visit **www.leemingpaterson.com**

Political messages

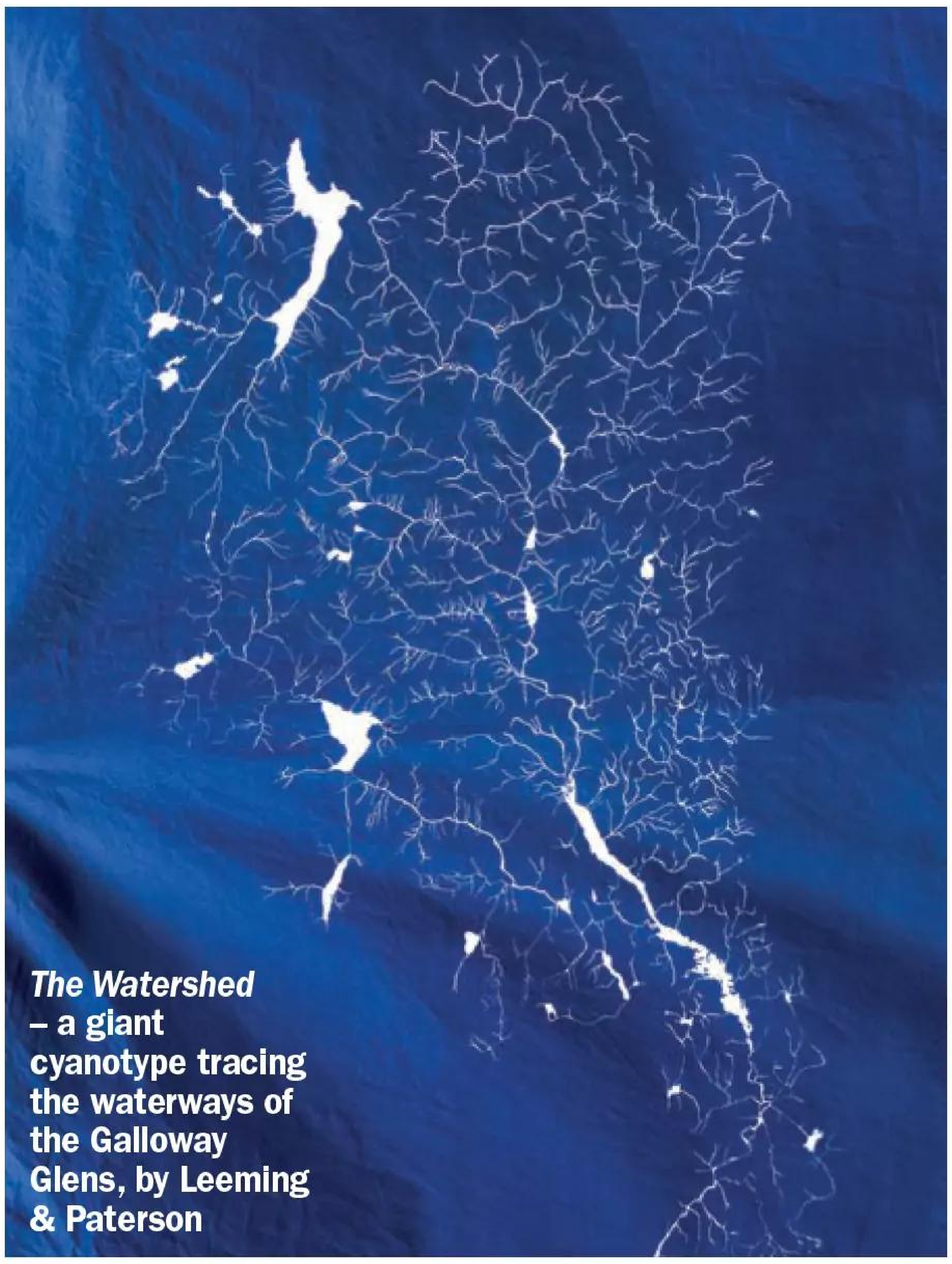
The Watershed represents a departure from their previous depictions of the Galloway glens and hills, so sensuously conveyed in their 2014 book, *Zero Footprint* – but recent changes in the political landscape have had a significant



From Al Brydon's series, Solargraphs, showing the effects of moisture on a pinhole camera image exposed for months outside

© TED LEEMING AND MORAG PATERSON

Bad Algae 2, by Leeming & Paterson, merges images of pollution, water and dead wildlife



The Watershed – a giant cyanotype tracing the waterways of the Galloway Glens, by Leeming & Paterson

© TED LEEMING AND MORAG PATERSON

impact on how Ted and Morag see their roles as photographers. 'The focus is increasingly towards projects, to becoming visual storytellers, immersive in the landscape,' Ted stresses. 'Everything now is around climate change and raising awareness. Even when we're out for a walk, those issues come out in the photography. There might still be a pretty picture, but there's usually a message behind it now.'

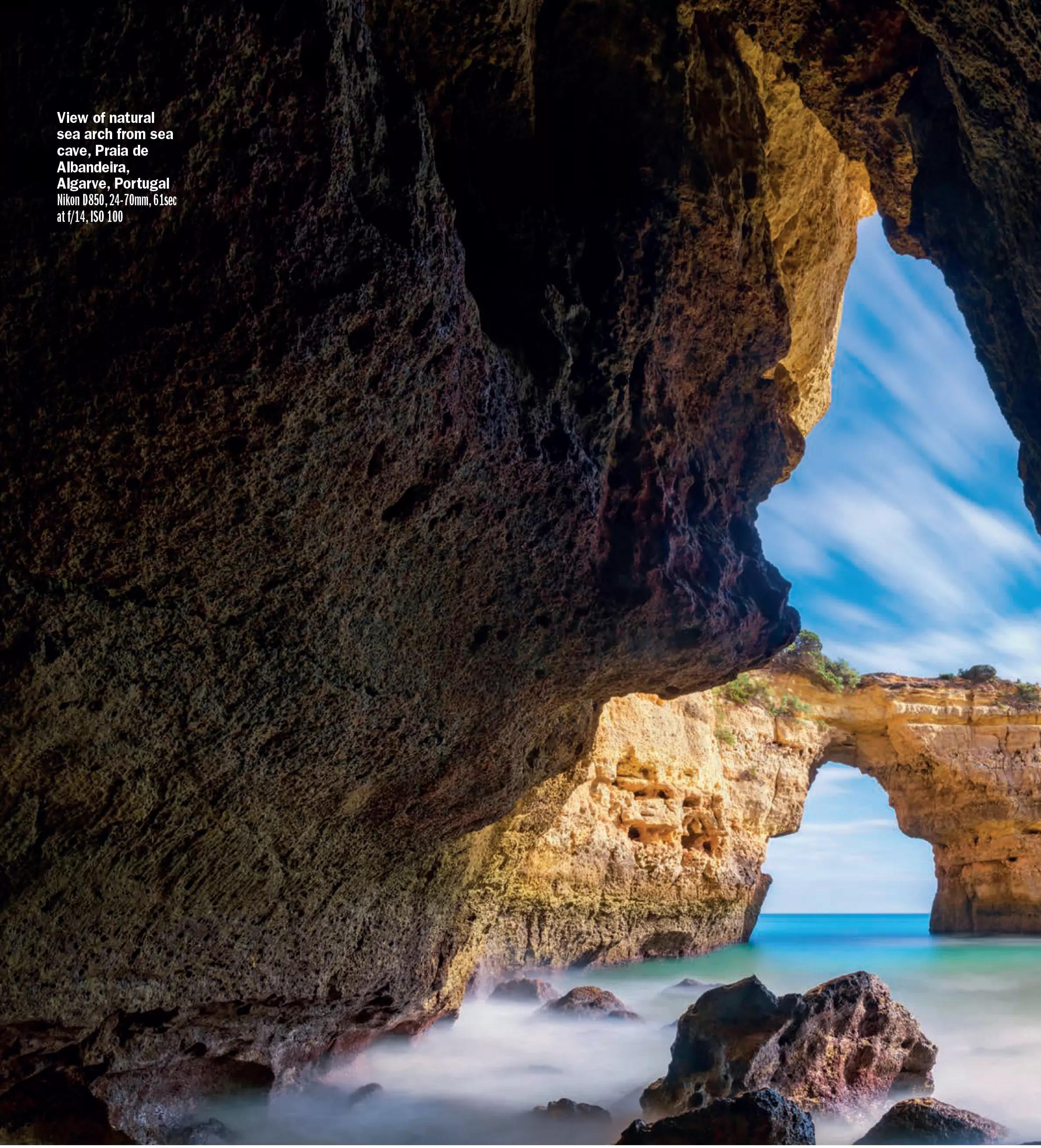
The couple's abstract and political interpretations of the landscape have resulted in the addition of elements and subject matter that many traditionalists would strive to exclude from their viewfinders altogether. For instance, Morag's 'Bad Algae' series features compound images created from merging various pictures taken over two years. These elements include images of pollution, dead wildlife and diesel stains – not what you'd expect to see at a 'honeypot' landscape location, but if the definition of landscape is broadened to include the environment where we all live and interact, then such gritty depictions are as valid to the annals of landscape photography as any dawn sunrise over Durdle Door.

Breaking boundaries and myths

Valda Bailey believes the traditional definitions and boundaries of landscape photography are being reset and the popularity of the Bailey & Chinnery workshops reflects this. She says: 'We all know that creativity thrives on boundaries, so we encourage people to find something that appeals to them – a tree, a mountain, a seascape, it could even be a rusty waste paper bin with a nice texture – and then sit there for an hour and just try to make as many different images as they can.' Valda also encourages her clients to use camera modes and settings in ways they weren't designed for, in order to break away from the orthodox. 'You're really limited only by your imagination,' she says. 'People find that exciting, they find there's great freedom, so if I want the grass to be red, the grass can be red. Nobody's going to tell me that I have to stick to the colours that have been strictly dictated when shooting conventionally. It's a matter of freedom and you start to play like a child would play with crayons.'

While some may feel such abstract interpretations lack authenticity, even a 'straight' landscape shot isn't necessarily a true record of the scene. As Al Brydon explains: 'What you perceive as a natural landscape is not really the case; it's been manipulated and changed for millennia by people. I try to think about those people who've gone before me and walked that path before me. You're photographing to speak for the people who can't speak any more.'

This concept inspired his dark and moody series, 'As We Wander', shot mostly in the Peak District. 'The landscape I'm inhabiting will still be here long after I'm gone,' he says. 'I'm trying to comprehend this: the massive amount of time during which its contours are moulded by both natural and unnatural manipulation. I find it extremely comforting to know that after I've made my last photograph of the landscape, it will continue to exist. It will change as nature claims it and humankind alters it. I will end. You will end. The landscape will remain.' AP



View of natural sea arch from sea cave, Praia de Albandeira, Algarve, Portugal
Nikon D850, 24-70mm, 61sec at f/14, ISO 100

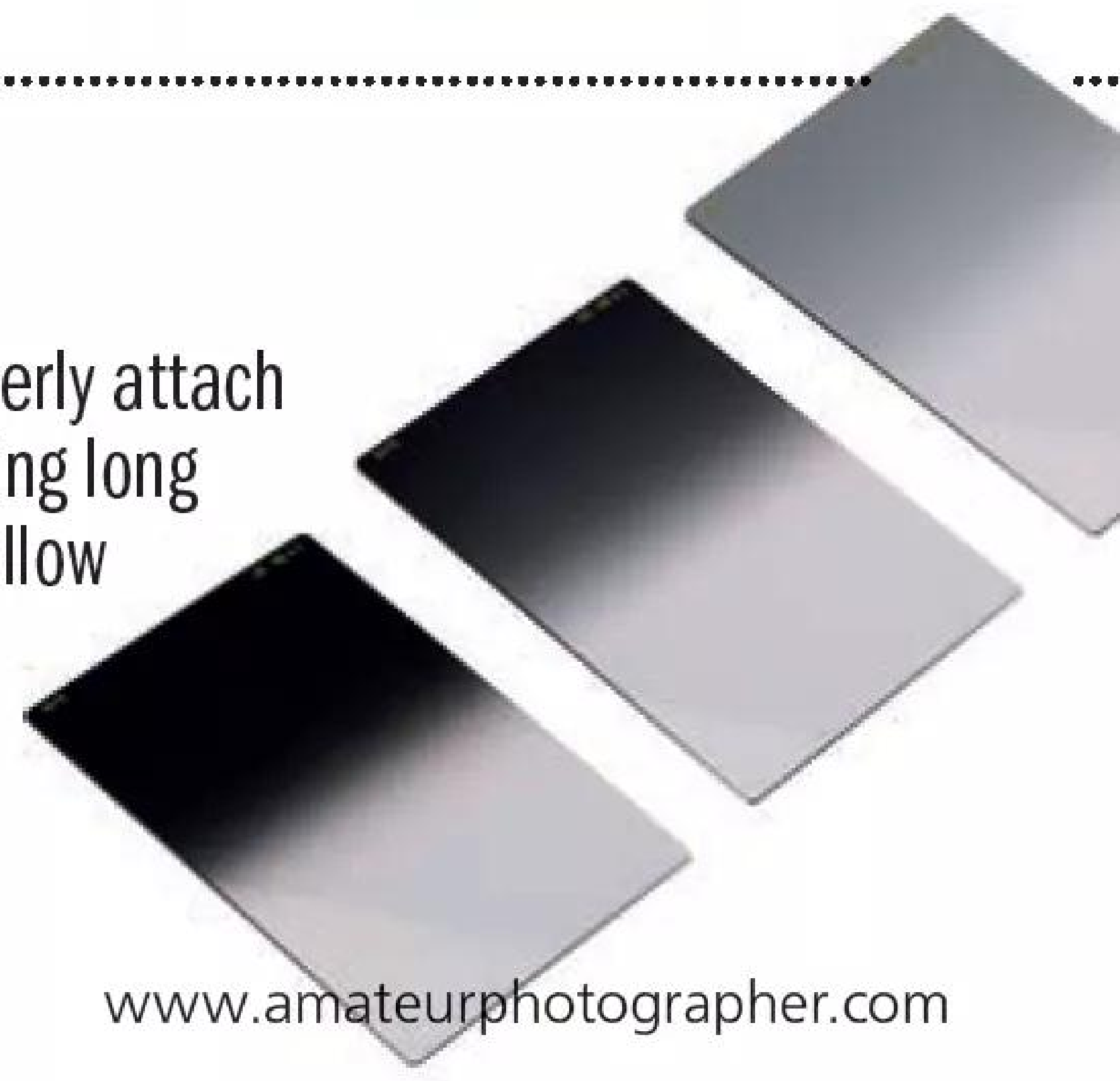
KIT LIST

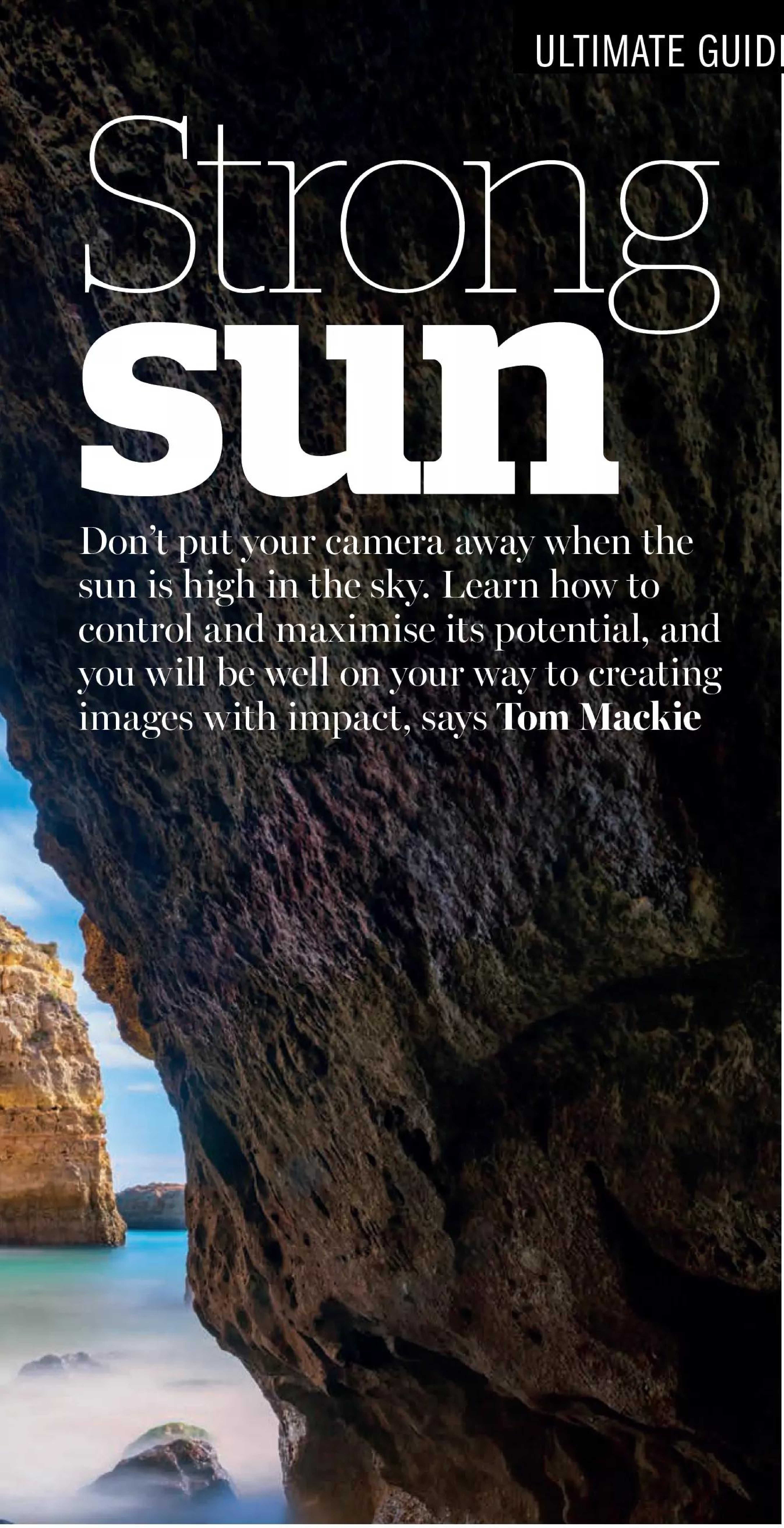
Tripod

It's essential to mount your camera on a sturdy tripod when using long exposures with ND filters, and when making multiple exposures for blending HDRs. It will also improve your photography overall.

Filter holder

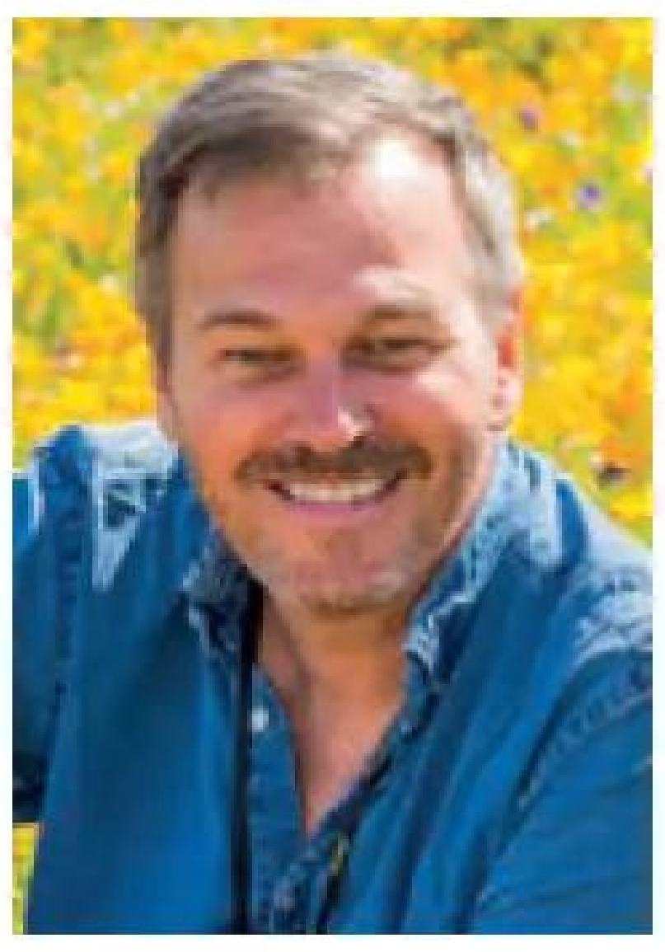
A filter holder is needed to properly attach a neutral-density filter for creating long exposures. The LEE holder will allow a polarising filter and an ND filter to be used together, which can be useful.





Strong sun

Don't put your camera away when the sun is high in the sky. Learn how to control and maximise its potential, and you will be well on your way to creating images with impact, says **Tom Mackie**

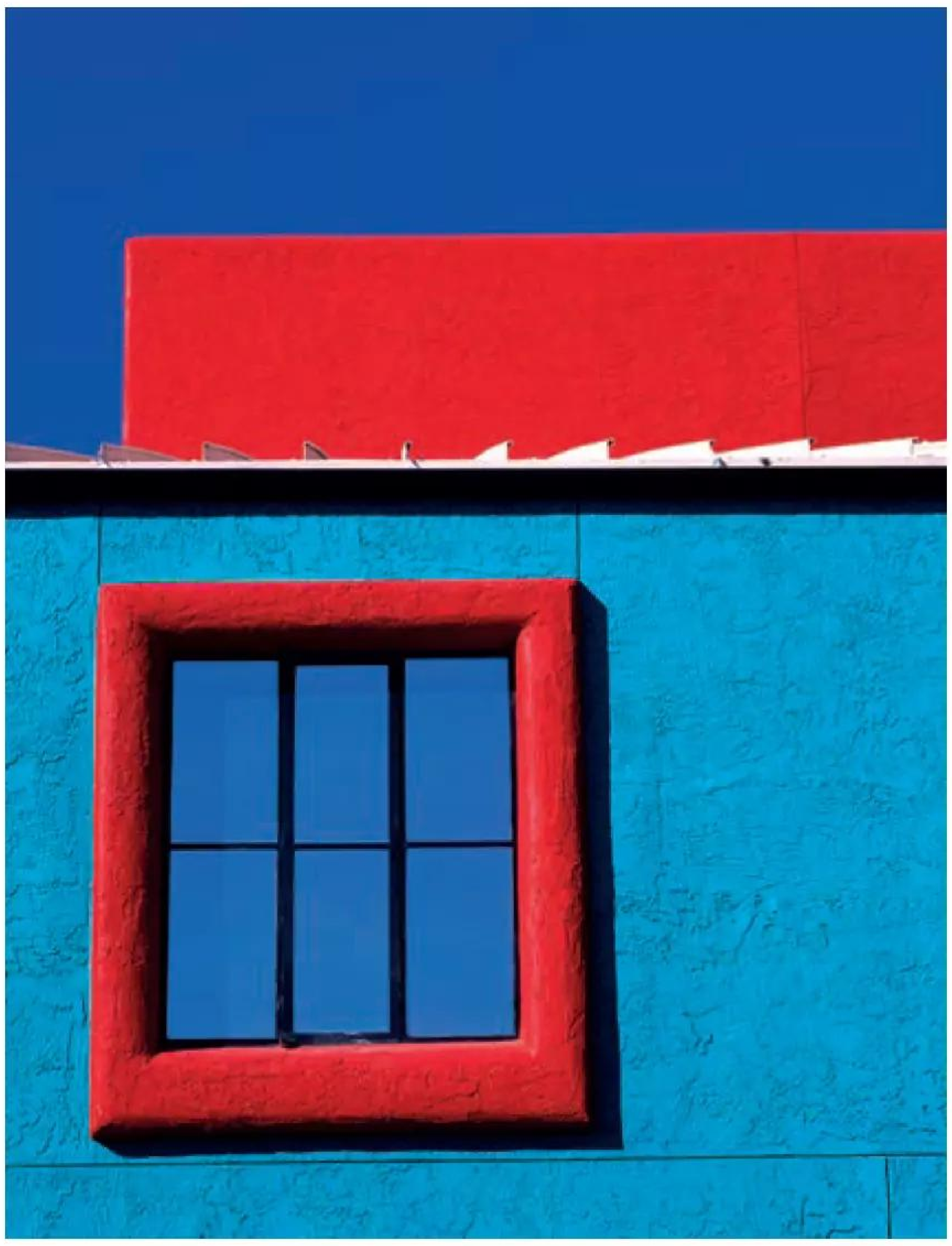


Tom Mackie
Tom Mackie has pursued a lifelong career as a landscape photographer and is one of the world's leading practitioners of the art. His work is featured in a number of books including *The World's Top Photographers: Landscape*. Tom leads workshops in the UK and abroad. See **www.tommackie.com**

I remember the days when Mr Kodak gave instructions with every roll of film to always place the sun at your back to produce correctly exposed images. While they may be correctly exposed, this would also produce flat and boring photos. It was suggested to never photograph into the sun because the strong light would be far too much for film to cope with. When handled correctly, though, strong light can produce some amazing results. Photography has come a long way since then and digital sensors are capable of handling 14 stops of light as opposed to five stops in the days of transparency film. While the principles are the same, we have so much more control now.

The key is to understand how to handle harsh lighting situations to create dramatic images. We've all heard that it's best to photograph

ALL PICTURES © TOM MACKIE



La Placita window, Tucson, Arizona, shot in the midday sun
Pentax 6x7, 200mm, 1/60sec at f/11, Fuji Velvia

ND filter

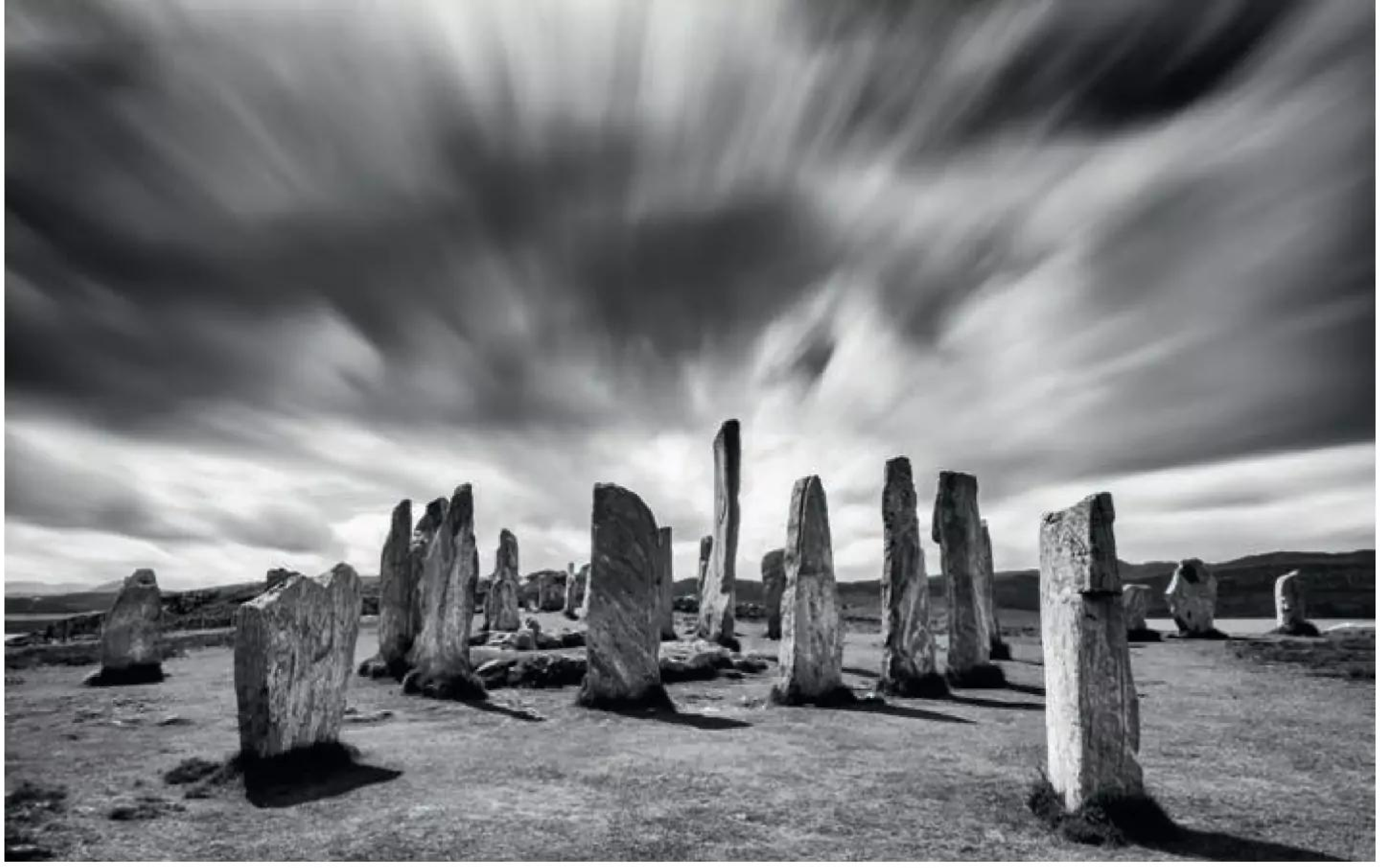
A neutral-density filter will allow long exposures in harsh lighting conditions by reducing the light that reaches the sensor. These filters come in various densities ranging from 1 to 15 stops.

Polariser

A polariser helps to reduce the glare that harsh light produces on subjects, and increase the saturation to make colours pop. It will also remove reflections on water surfaces to allow the colour to come through.

Wideangle lens

A wideangle lens is essential for landscape photographers. It allows you to include more of your subject, and to use strong shadows and clouds as compositional aids.

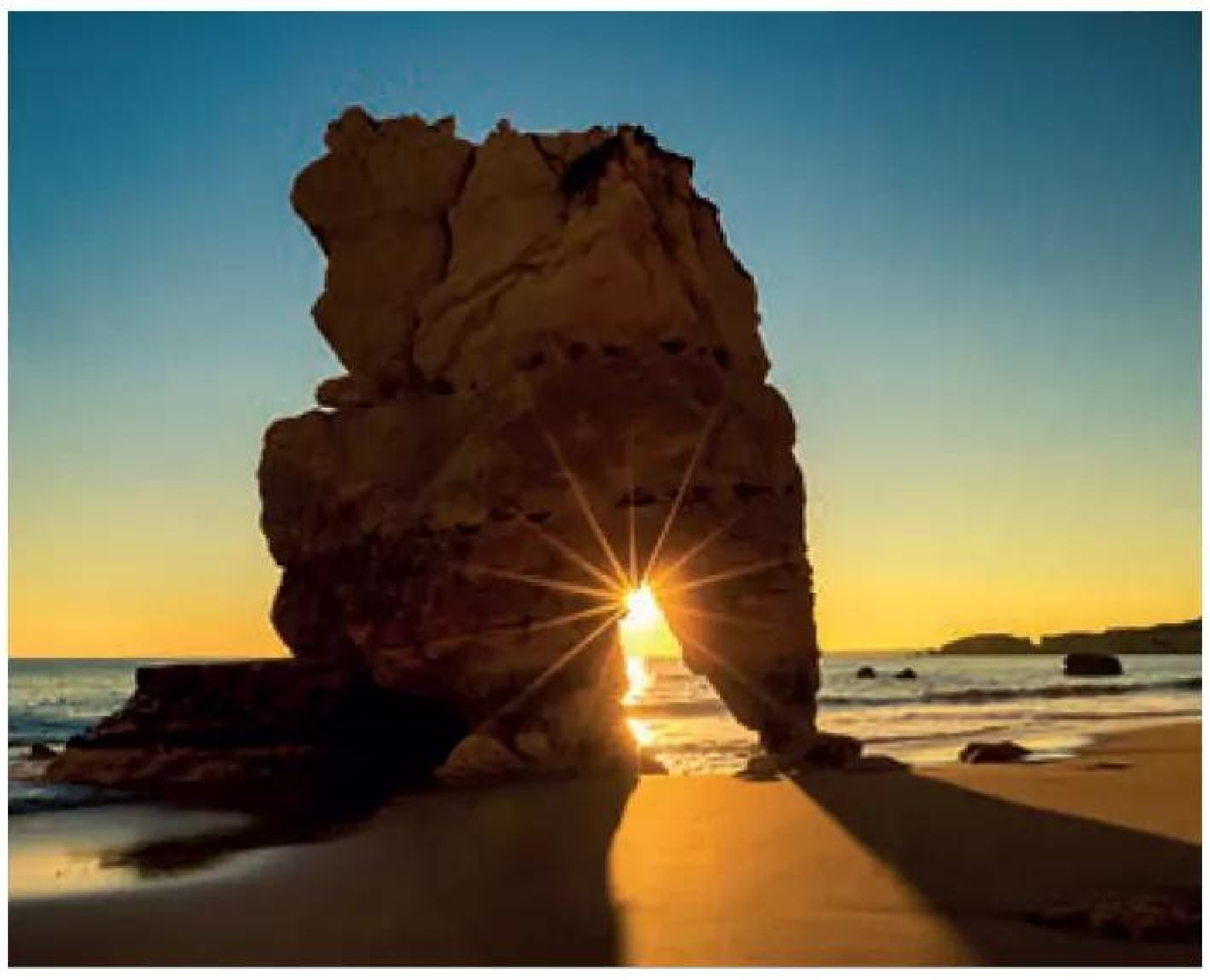


Cloudscape over Callanish Stones, Isle of Lewis, Outer Hebrides, Scotland, UK
Nikon D800, 24-70mm, 138sec at f/16, ISO 100

at either ends of the day for the best light, but don't put your camera away when the sun is high in the sky because you'll be missing out on so many more great photo possibilities. Using a polarising filter will help to darken the blue sky and make those clouds pop out, as well as remove glare and reflections from foliage, water and buildings thus increasing colour saturation. The bright highlights of rocky coastlines and white buildings can often run the risk of burning out in strong lighting conditions, but using a polariser will help to control the light. It's especially useful at midday in tropical coast locations when the sun penetrates the water reflecting off a sandy ocean floor. A polariser will remove the reflections on the surface of the water allowing the turquoise colour to come through.

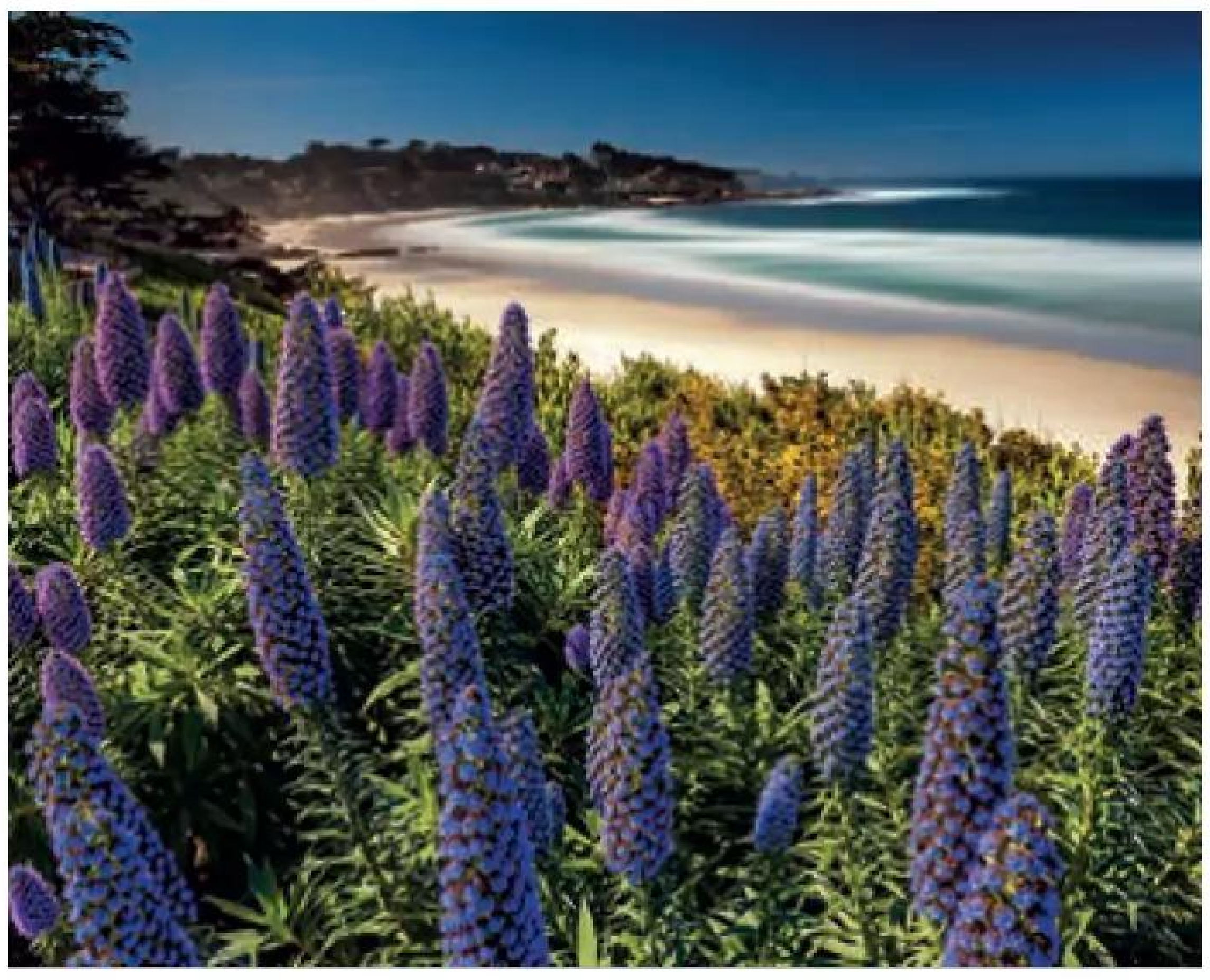
I often use a polariser along with a neutral-density (ND) filter, especially when photographing along the coast, in order to slow the exposure down to create a misty water effect. Of course, you'll need to mount your camera on a tripod to execute this technique. If there are any clouds present, I use a long enough exposure to get some movement in them. It's ideal when the clouds are moving towards the camera to create an explosive sky effect emanating from the centre of the frame. Which ND filter you use depends on the time of day. I use the LEE Super Stopper (15 stops) when the sun's intensity is the strongest, enabling exposures of several minutes. I wouldn't recommend using this at any other time or your exposures would be hours, if not days, long! The LEE Big Stopper (10 stops) is perfect for shooting when light levels are lower in the morning or afternoon depending on the length of exposure you desire. The LEE Little Stopper (6 stops) is great for low light or when you only need an exposure of a few seconds.

TOM'S TIPS FOR SHOOTING IN HARSH LIGHT



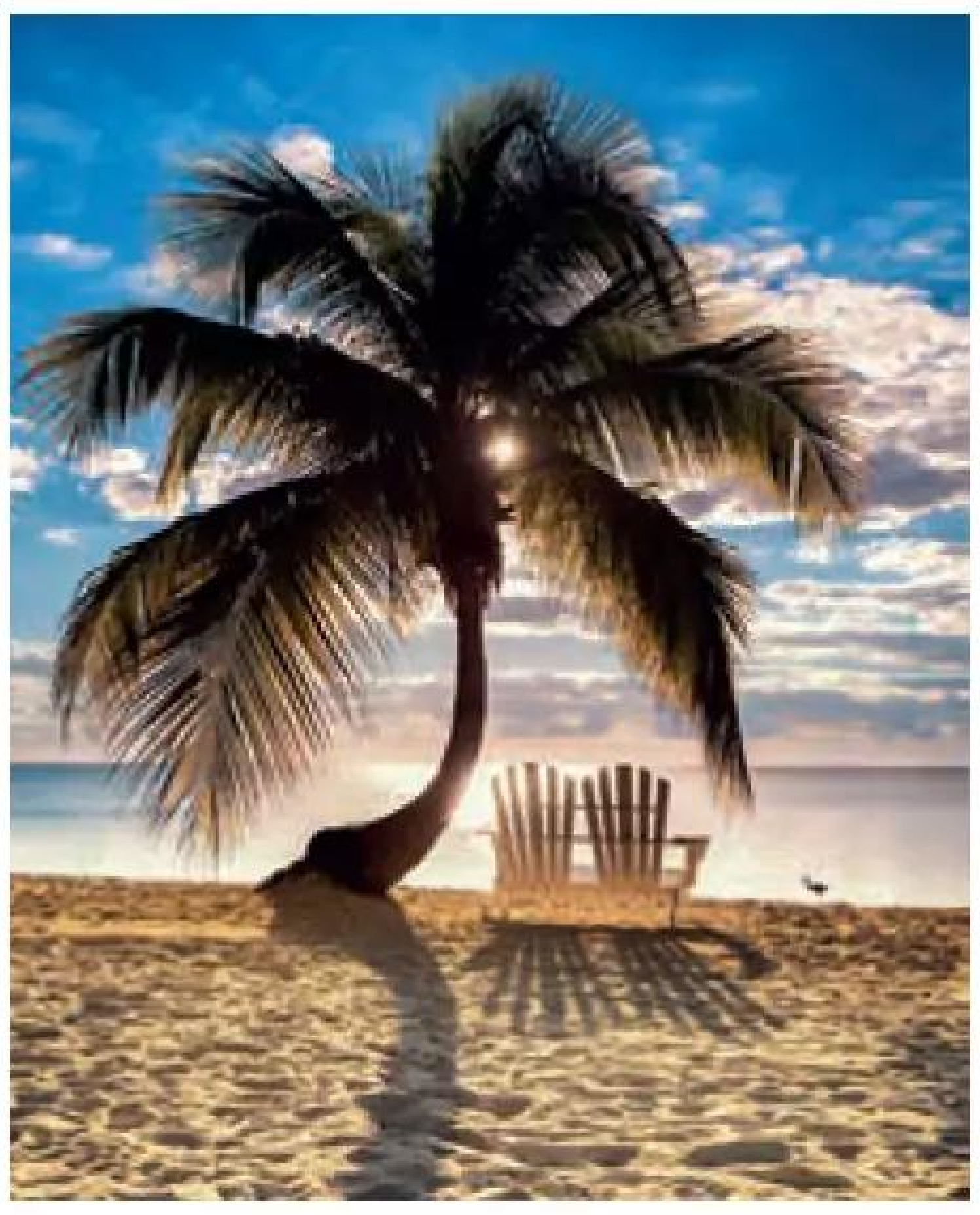
Use shadows creatively

Shadows can often be distracting, but you can use them to your advantage. They can add depth to your photo and act as lead-in lines to direct the viewer through the photo, especially when using a wideangle lens.



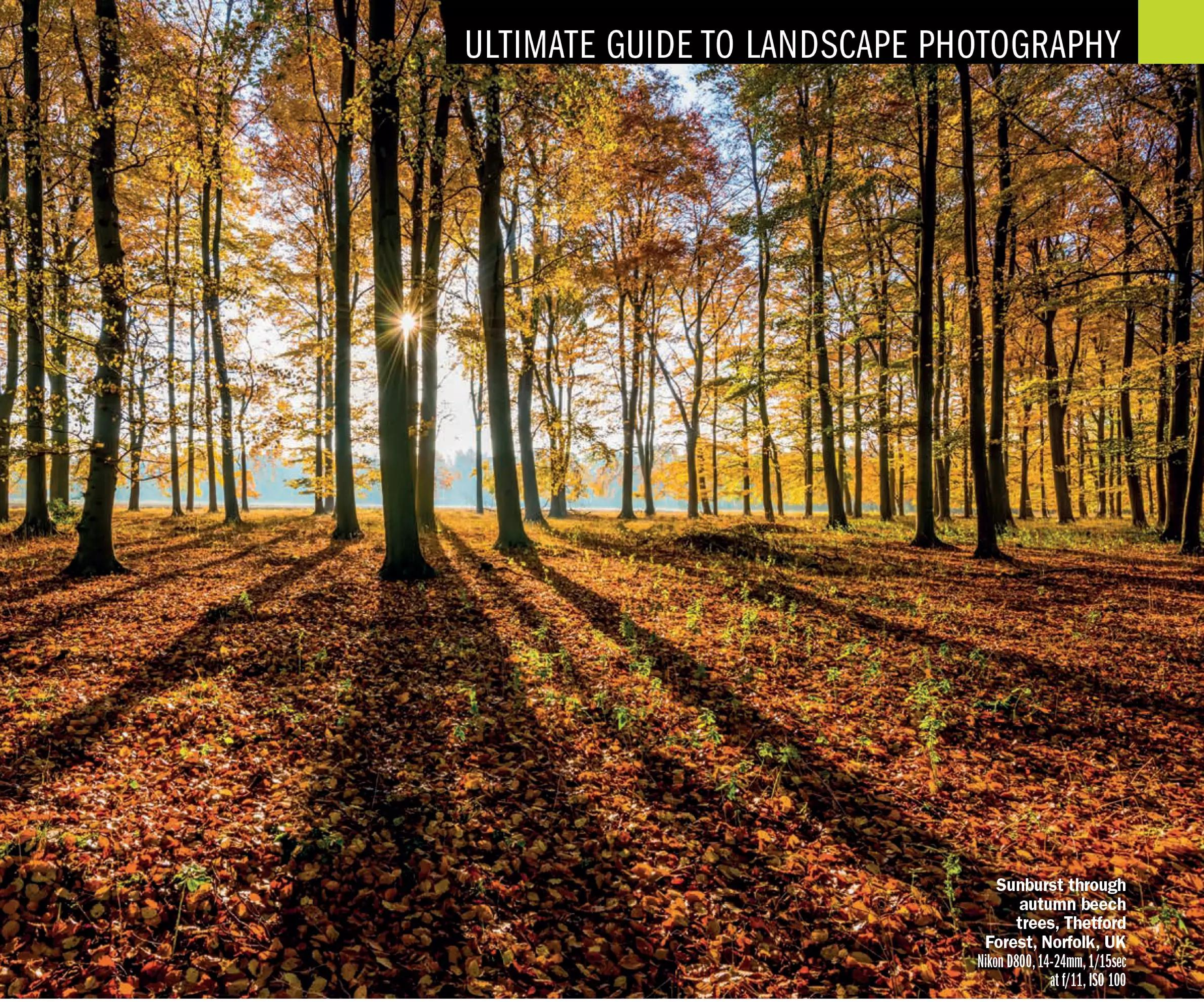
Slow it down

An ND filter is great for getting rid of people from a busy beach as I did here in Carmel Bay, California. I used a 1-minute exposure to give the sunlit beach a softer look and the people walking along the beach disappeared.



Striking silhouettes

Shooting into the sun can produce graphic results. Select a definable subject and try not to merge different elements. Place the sun behind your subject and have it peek out using a small aperture to create a sunburst.



Sunburst through autumn beech trees, Thetford Forest, Norfolk, UK
Nikon D800, 14-24mm, 1/15sec at f/11, ISO 100

Make it black & white

Without colour, the emphasis is on line, shape, texture, light and shadow. Switch your camera to monochrome in the menu to visualise the tones of the scene in B&W. Shooting in raw and convert the file later.

Try High Dynamic Range

There are occasions when the light is so strong, it's necessary to combine exposures, such as with this slot canyon. Exposing for the sky, midtones and shadows enabled me to combine all three images in post.

Silhouettes and shadows

I love photographing straight into the sun as it creates strong, graphic images. A bit of care needs to be taken though, for several reasons. First, it's best when the sun is low in the sky. I normally try to hide the sun behind something so it's just creeping out to create a sunburst. A wideangle focal length will work the best for this. The size of the sunburst is determined by your aperture size – f/22 will elongate the points more than, say, f/11. It's a personal choice dependant on the effect you desire. When the sun is low in the sky, it creates strong silhouettes, but make sure your subject has a distinctive, recognisable shape and it doesn't merge with other elements otherwise it becomes a big, black blob. The shadows cast from your subject can often be used as a compositional tool to lead the viewer into the scene, and a wideangle lens will accomplish this for the best effect. I often use this technique in forests

Cottage by the bay, County Donegal, Ireland
Nikon D850, 24-70mm, 567sec at f/18, ISO 200

with tree shadows, but make sure your trees are evenly separated otherwise the composition can look too cluttered. Finally, make sure you compensate for shooting into the sun by increasing your exposure by at least 1 stop, as your camera's meter will want to underexpose the image.

Make it monochrome

I always say, 'If you don't have the light, make it black & white.' But even when the sun is high you can create images with impact. When there isn't any distraction from colour, the scene relies on line, shape, texture, light and shadow. I switch my camera display to monochrome – in the settings under picture control or style – so I can see how the tones will work in black & white. Then I process the raw file in Nik's Silver Efex Pro 2.

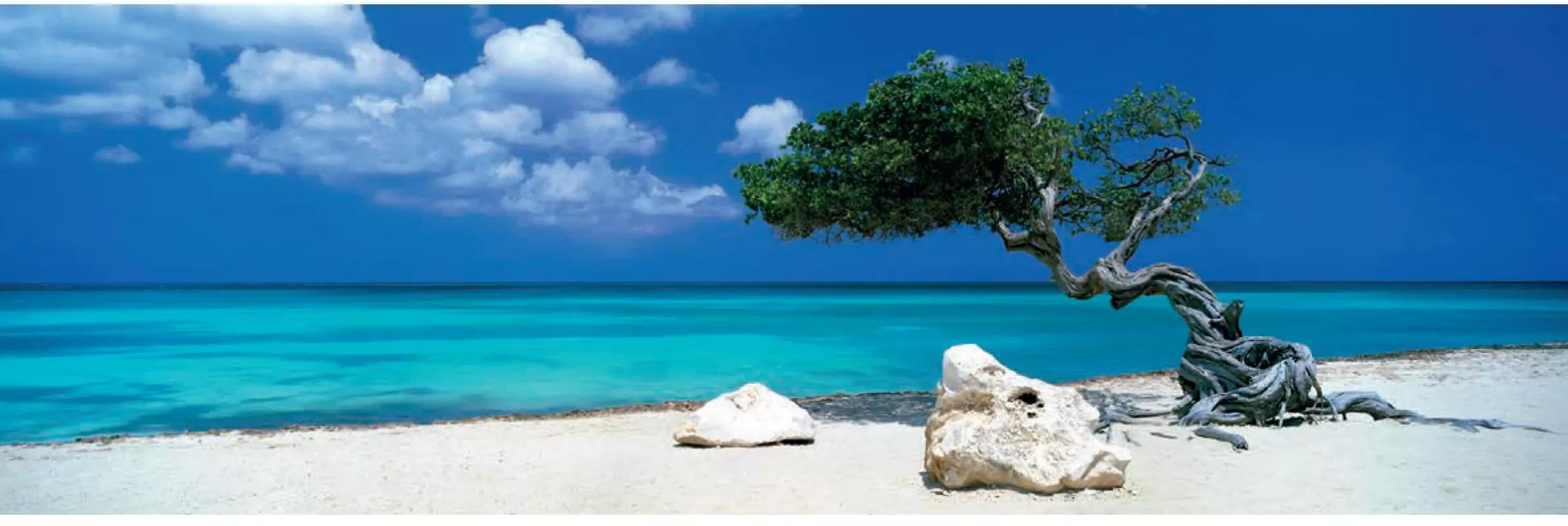
HDR for extremes

When lighting conditions are extremely harsh, it can be difficult to cope with the wide exposure latitudes presented by the scene. One way to combat this is to create multiple images, exposing for the highlights, midtones and shadows and then combine them using Lightroom or the processing software of your choice. As I use the Nikon D850 with its wide latitude sensor, I find that I seldom need to do this as I can control the exposure range of a strongly lit scene by exposing for the highlights and then lighten the shadows in post processing.

So the next time you are confronted with harsh lighting, either at home or away, keep your camera at the ready and consider trying some of these simple techniques to create images with instant impact. AP

Why it works

▼ Photographing in harsh sunlight normally produces flat, boring images, but when I was in the Caribbean I shot this Divi Divi tree under the strong, midday sun. I had no idea it would turn out to be my bestselling image, appearing in magazines, cards, calendars, puzzles and in IKEA as a canvas print for five years. I actually photographed it at sunrise and sunset as well, but neither image produced the appeal this one has. I used a Fujifilm GX619 panoramic camera with Velvia to create deep, saturated colours. A polariser provided the finishing touch by removing the glare on the surface of the water allowing the turquoise colour to come through. It also darkened down the blue sky giving a contrast to the white clouds that seemingly emanate from the tree.



From the makers of *Amateur Photographer* magazine

DISCOVER THE SECRETS BEHIND LEGENDARY ALBUM ART

The power of imagery on album covers is immeasurable. In this packed, 132-page guide you will discover the stories of the 30 greatest album covers of all time, and the creative process behind their iconic photography. As well as exclusive insights from the photographers and designers involved, some big-name artists have spoken about why they love their album covers, too. The albums featured are voted for by an expert panel of other top photographers and musicians, and a very wide range of genres and eras are covered – from the Beatles to Taylor Swift, and beyond.

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO

THE GREATEST ALBUM COVERS OF ALL TIME

The stories behind the covers that made history!

FEATURING 30 ICONIC ALBUMS

Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band

Parklife

Rumours

ONLY £9.99
+ postage

ORDER YOUR COPY TODAY

Visit **shop.kelsey.co.uk/AMP-ALBUM**

Call on **01959 543 747** and quote **BKZAMPACP**

Lines are open Mon-Fri 8.30am to 5.30pm. Calls are charged at your standard network rate.

SCAN ME

James Abbott

James Abbott is a landscape and portrait photographer based in Cambridge. He's also a freelance photography journalist and editor specialising in photography techniques, tutorials and reviews. If you can think of a subject, he's probably photographed it. See more of his work at **www.jamesaphoto.co.uk**

KIT LIST

◀ Tripod

It's essential that the camera doesn't move between shots, so a tripod must be used when focus stacking.

hähnel
HOLD

Shutter remote ▶

Another way to avoid camera movement is to use a shutter remote. Alternatively, you can use the camera's self-timer.

Nikon
AF-S NIKKOR 24-70mm 1:2.8E ED
VR

◀ Any camera and lens

You can use any camera and lens for focus stacking, although for landscapes wideangle and telephoto lenses are most commonly used.

▼ Photoshop

Images shot at different planes of focus need to be blended together in post-processing, and Photoshop can do this.

Derelict barn at the Roaches in the Peak District, Staffordshire
Nikon D610, 16-35mm, 3sec at f/18, ISO 100

Absolute sharpness

Focus stacking is a great technique for getting front-to-back sharpness in landscapes at f/11. As **James Abbott** reveals, it's not that difficult, either

Sharpness and depth-of-field, or indeed a lack of it when shooting some subjects, have long been a creative way of controlling what the viewers of images are drawn to. And for the majority of landscapes, a large depth-of-field with front-to-back sharpness is often preferable. The only problem is, it's not always possible to get everything in focus; some parts of the scene will be pin-sharp while others, usually the background, will be 'acceptably sharp', and that's where focus stacking comes in.

Focus stacking makes images look hyperreal because the results are much sharper than a single exposure at f/11 or f/16, and the depth-of-field offers pin-sharpness throughout the scene. The human eye certainly cannot resolve this level of detail and sharpness, and is one of the many reasons why this is such a compelling technique. So compelling, in fact, that it's even safe to say it's addictive: once you stack, there's no going back!

How to shoot focus-stacked images

Focus stacking requires you to shoot between three and five images of a scene, on average, with each focused at a different point in the scene. This ensures that absolute sharpness is achieved at all distances between the camera and the background, and just like shooting a panoramic image, you have to make sure that in each shot the depth-of-field overlaps half of the previous shot and the next one. These images are then blended together in Photoshop.

When shooting stacked images, everything is exactly the same as shooting a single image of a scene; you use the same settings, ideally aperture-priority or manual mode, and filters as required to control exposure. The two main differences are that you shoot at either f/8 or f/11 to take advantage of the lens' sweet spot (see below), and you take a number of images at different focus distances. The easiest way to focus is to shoot in live view, using the on-screen focus point

MENU
F11
ISO100
SONY

Use live view to focus on different points in the scene, starting at the bottom of the frame

ALL PICTURES © JAMES ABBOTT

to set the point of focus for each shot. Start at the bottom of the frame and move up the screen to capture an image at each of the main depths/distances within the scene. Don't forget to overlap the in-focus areas in each shot to ensure that sharpness is captured throughout the scene across three to five images.

When to focus stack

Like any technique there's a time and place for focus stacking, so use your judgement to avoid unnecessary editing and a hard drive full of image files. The basic test is whether or not the foreground interest is close to the camera or if the detail in the foreground and background are equally important and both need to be pin-sharp. You also need to ask yourself if you'll be making a large print of the image. For many wider scenes where the foreground interest is a couple of metres away from the camera, you can often get away with shooting at f/11-f/16 on a full-frame camera, or f/8- f/11 on APS-C. These settings provide sufficient overall image sharpness and depth-of-field for the respective camera formats.

Beyond acceptable sharpness

Acceptable sharpness is a term that's used to describe areas of an image that are in focus, but they are not as sharp as the area surrounding the actual point of focus. As the name suggests, this type of sharpness is deemed acceptable by most, and for the majority of landscape images, this occurs at the bottom of the frame or right at the back of the scene – so not necessarily prominent parts of the image. For scenes where the foreground is close to the camera and the background much further back, this phenomenon is accentuated and makes a strong case for using focus stacking to ensure sharpness throughout.

The sweet spot

This is the point where the lens is able to resolve detail at its sharpest before diffraction becomes an issue and results in an overall softening of images. The sweet spot of lenses most often sits in the middle of the aperture range, so f/8 or f/11.

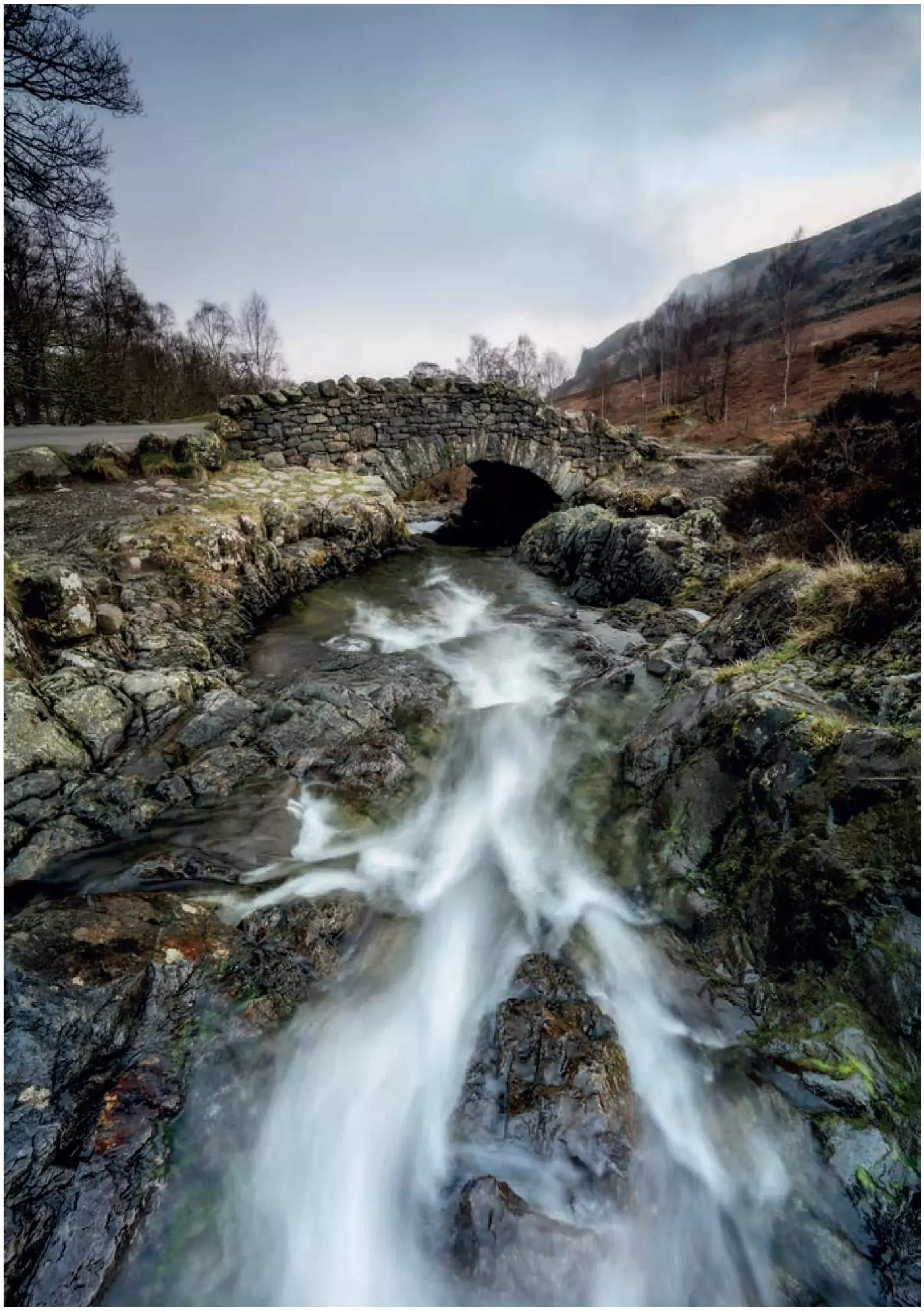
This can sometimes be confusing because when you say, 'the point a lens is at its sharpest', it's not uncommon for people to think that this statement relates to depth-of-field. Depth-of-field is obviously larger at f/22 than it is at f/8, but overall image sharpness at f/8 is noticeably sharper than that at f/22.

Focus stacking is all about taking advantage of the best image quality your lens can offer, and while sweet spot apertures don't provide the largest depth-of-field, the process allows you to achieve a depth-of-field and level of sharpness far in excess of that which is possible at f/16 or f/22.

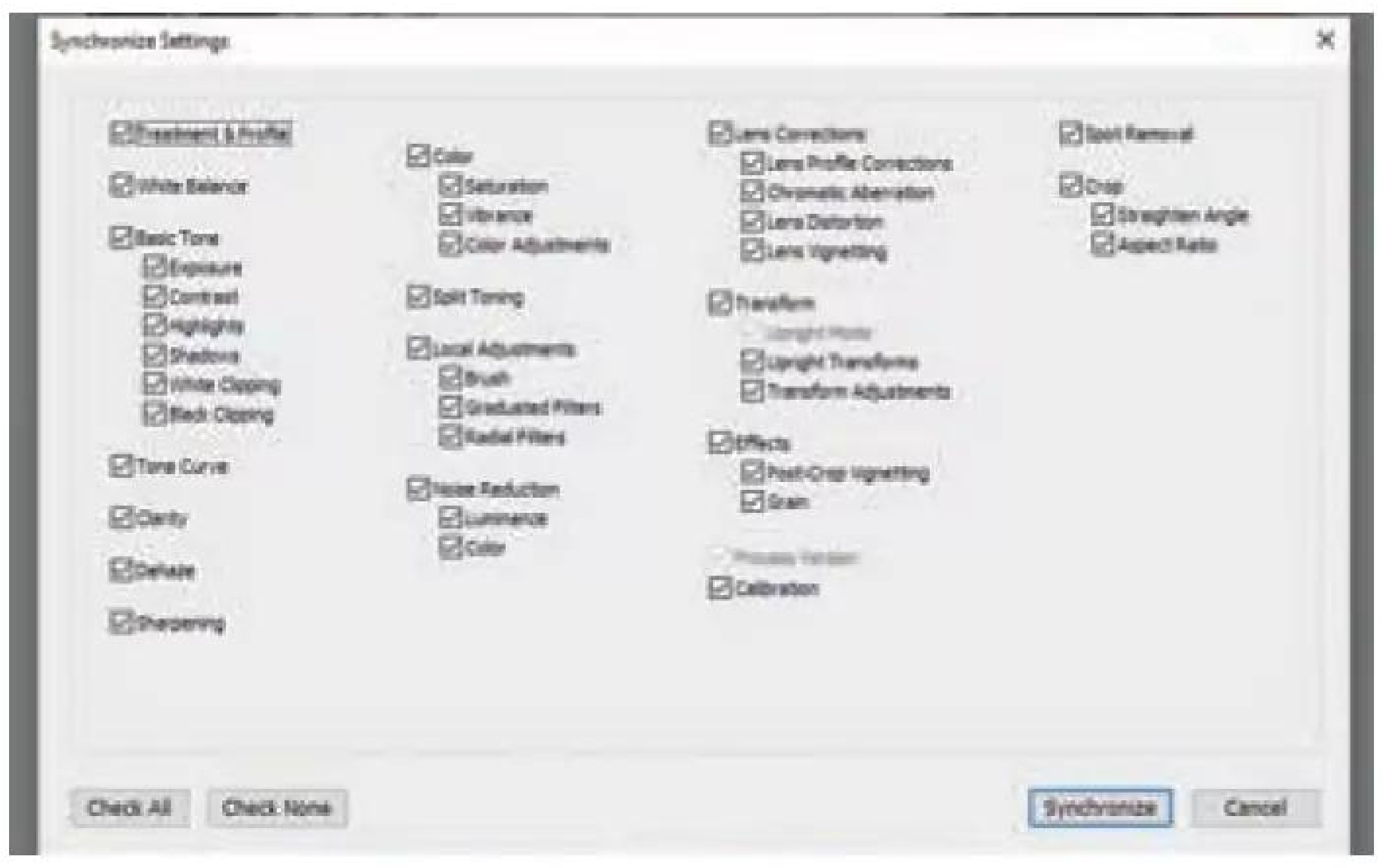
FOCUS STACKING IN LIGHTROOM & PHOTOSHOP

Once you've taken a set of focus-stacked images you'll need to merge them together to benefit from sharpness throughout a single image. Luckily, the process is often extremely easy because Photoshop offers controls that automate the process once you've output your raw files as JPEGs or TIFFs. The best file format to use is 16-bit TIFF because this is the best bit depth for smoother colour and tonal graduations. You can reduce images to 8-bit once editing has been completed.

There are times when Photoshop is unable to successfully stack images, and this occurs when there's either movement in the scene or when your source images haven't overlapped the sharp areas from one image to the next, thus leaving gaps. Practice makes perfect with this technique, and the more you edit the better you'll become. You'll also become aware of software limitations and be able to identify which scenes are most likely to be successful.

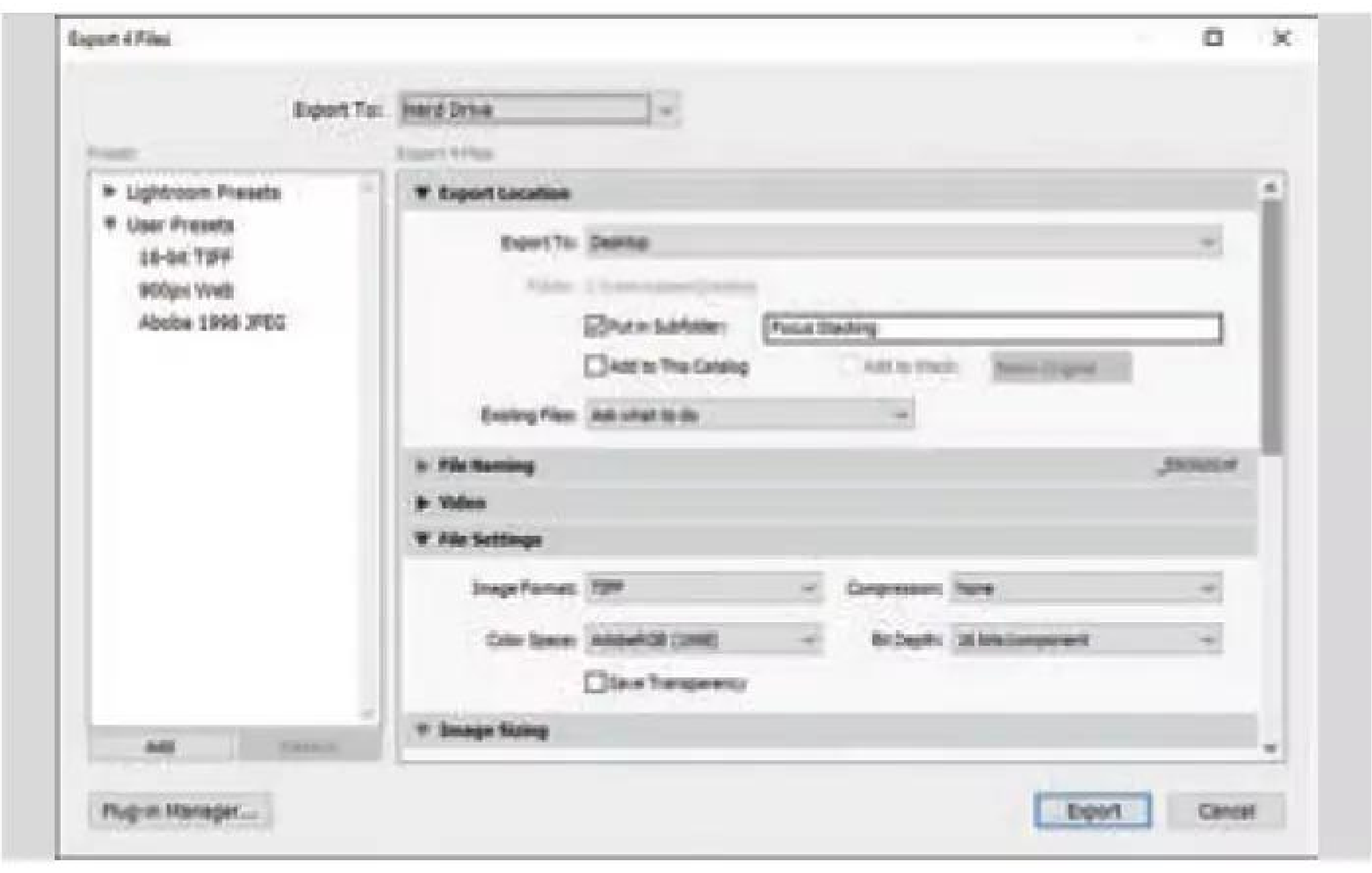


This image of Ashness Bridge in the Lake District is made up of four individual exposures shot at different focus points within the scene. I used f/11 to help slow the shutter to blur the moving water.
Sony Alpha 7R III, 16-35mm, f/2.8 at 16mm, 0.8sec at f/11, ISO 80



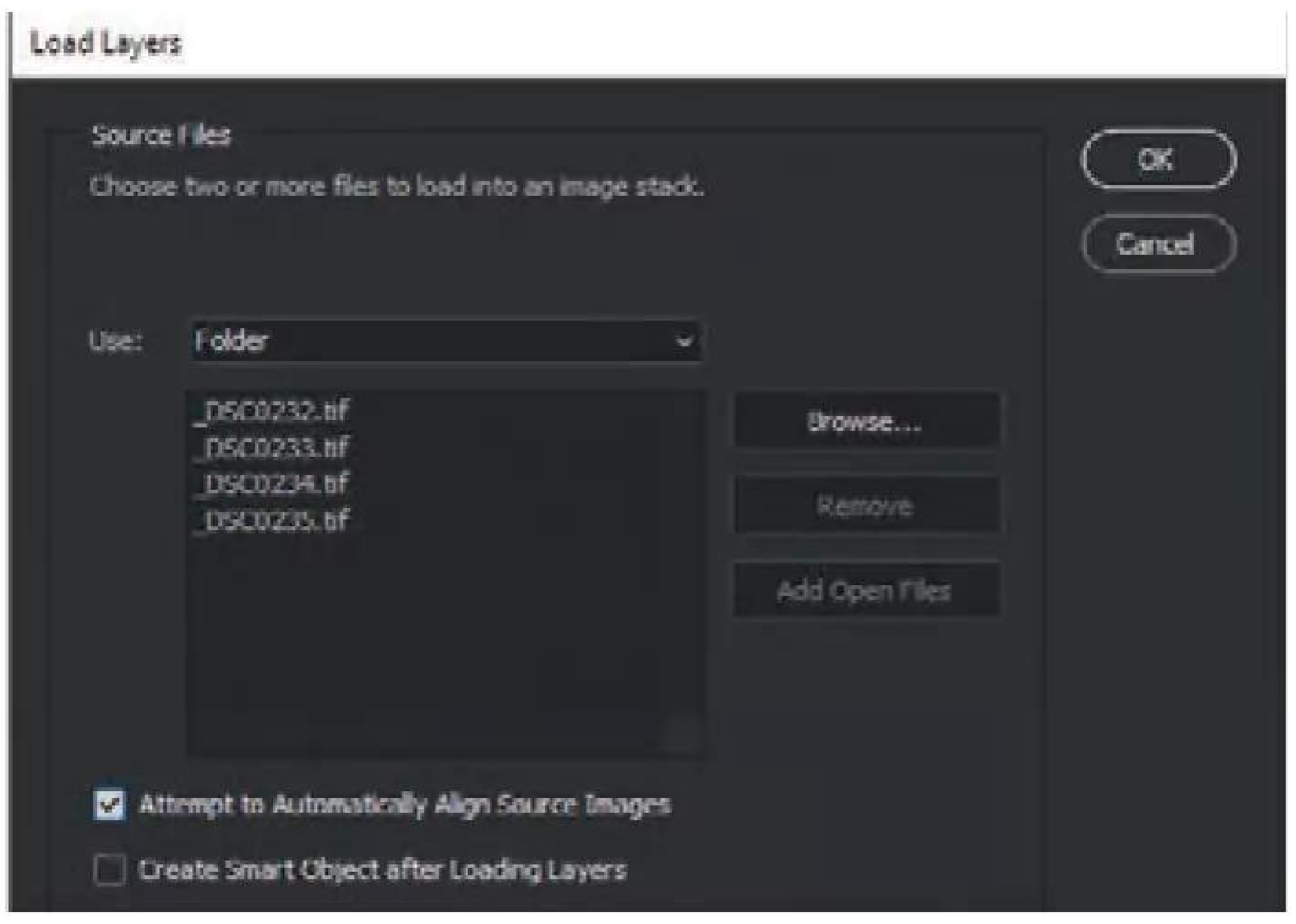
1 Sync raw settings

In Lightroom, process the first image in the stacking set, applying all the necessary adjustments. Once you're happy, hold Shift and left mouse click on the last image in the set. Next press the Syncronize button and when the dialogue window opens, click on Check All and then Syncronize. This will apply the same adjustments to all images.



2 Export images

With all images in the set still selected, press Ctrl+ Shift+E to open the Export dialogue window. Under Export To select Desktop, and check Put in Subfolder. Next, under File Settings select TIFF as the Image Format, AdobeRGB (1998) for Color Space and 16 bits/component. Finally, click on Export, but make sure Open in Photoshop isn't selected.



Load Layers

Source Files

Choose two or more files to load into an image stack.

Use: Folder

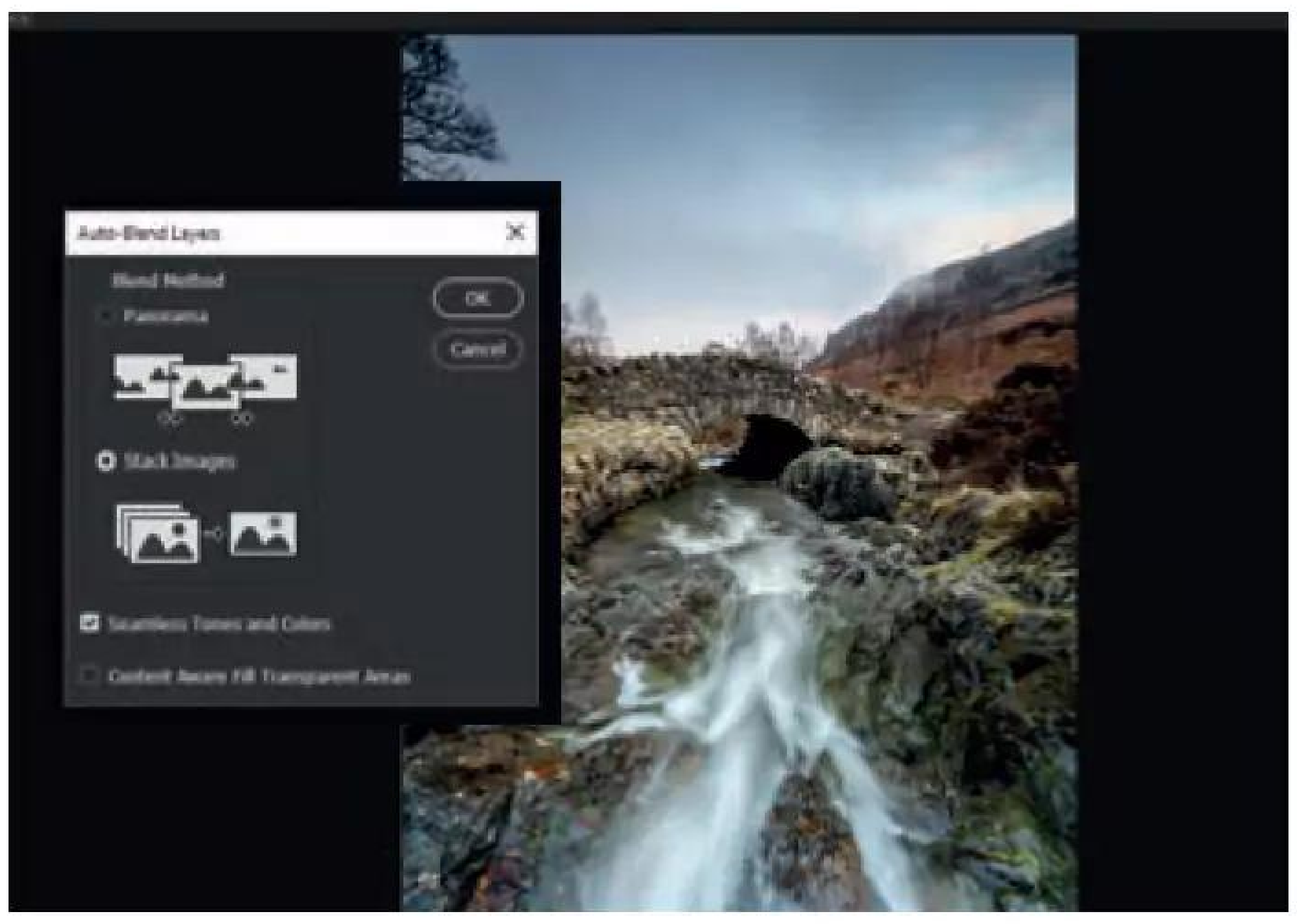
_DSC0232.tif
_DSC0233.tif
_DSC0234.tif
_DSC0235.tif

☑ Attempt to Automatically Align Source Images

☐ Create Smart Object after Loading Layers

3 Load files as Layers

Open Photoshop and go to File>Scripts>Load Files into Stack, and when the dialogue window opens set Use to Folder. Now click on Browse and locate the folder you create in the previous step. Make sure Attempt to Automatically Align Source Images is checked and click OK. Photoshop will now stack the images as Layers and align them.



Auto-Blend Layers

Blend Method

○ Panorama

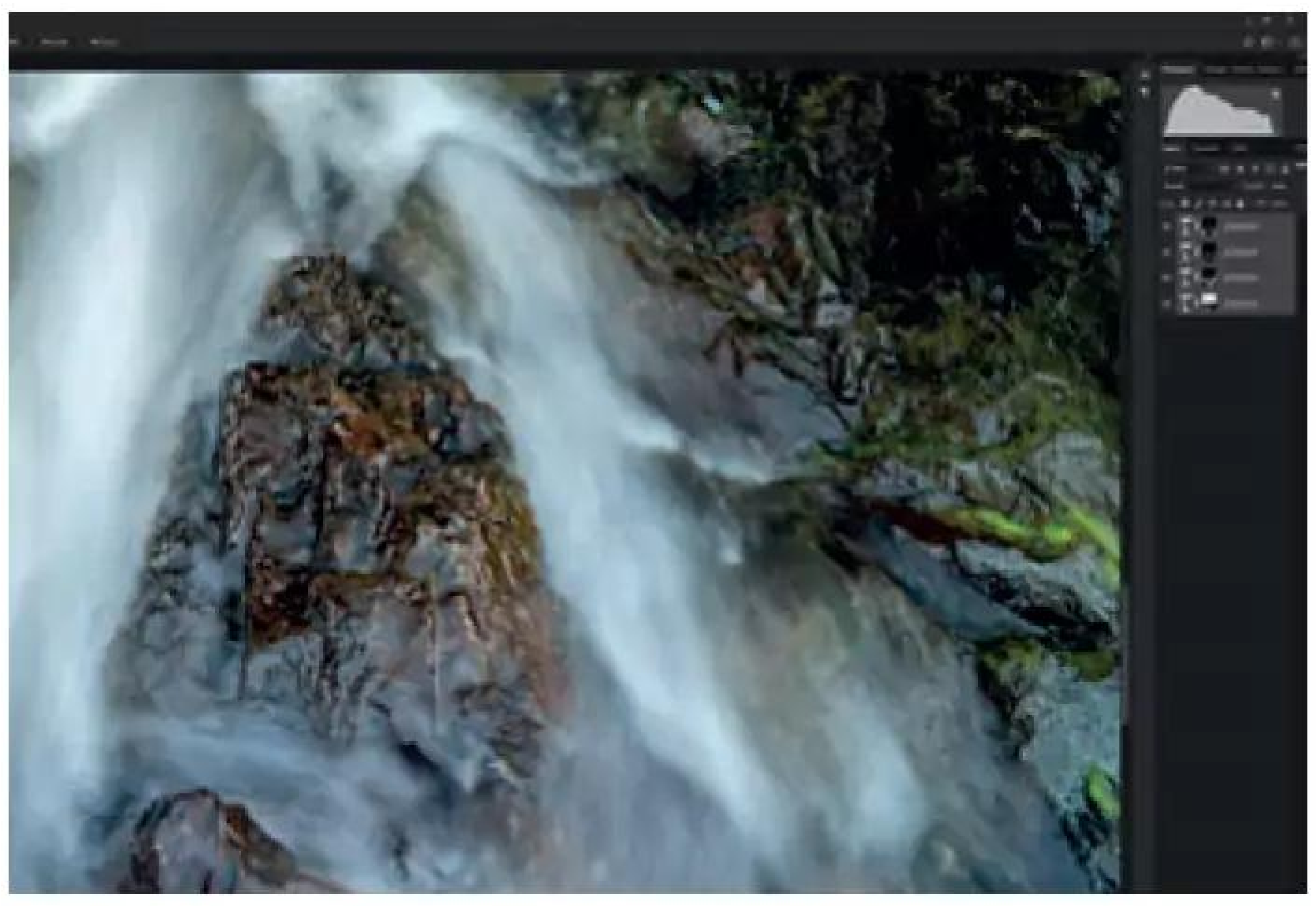
● Stack Images

☑ Seamless Tones and Colors

☐ Content Aware Fill Transparent Areas

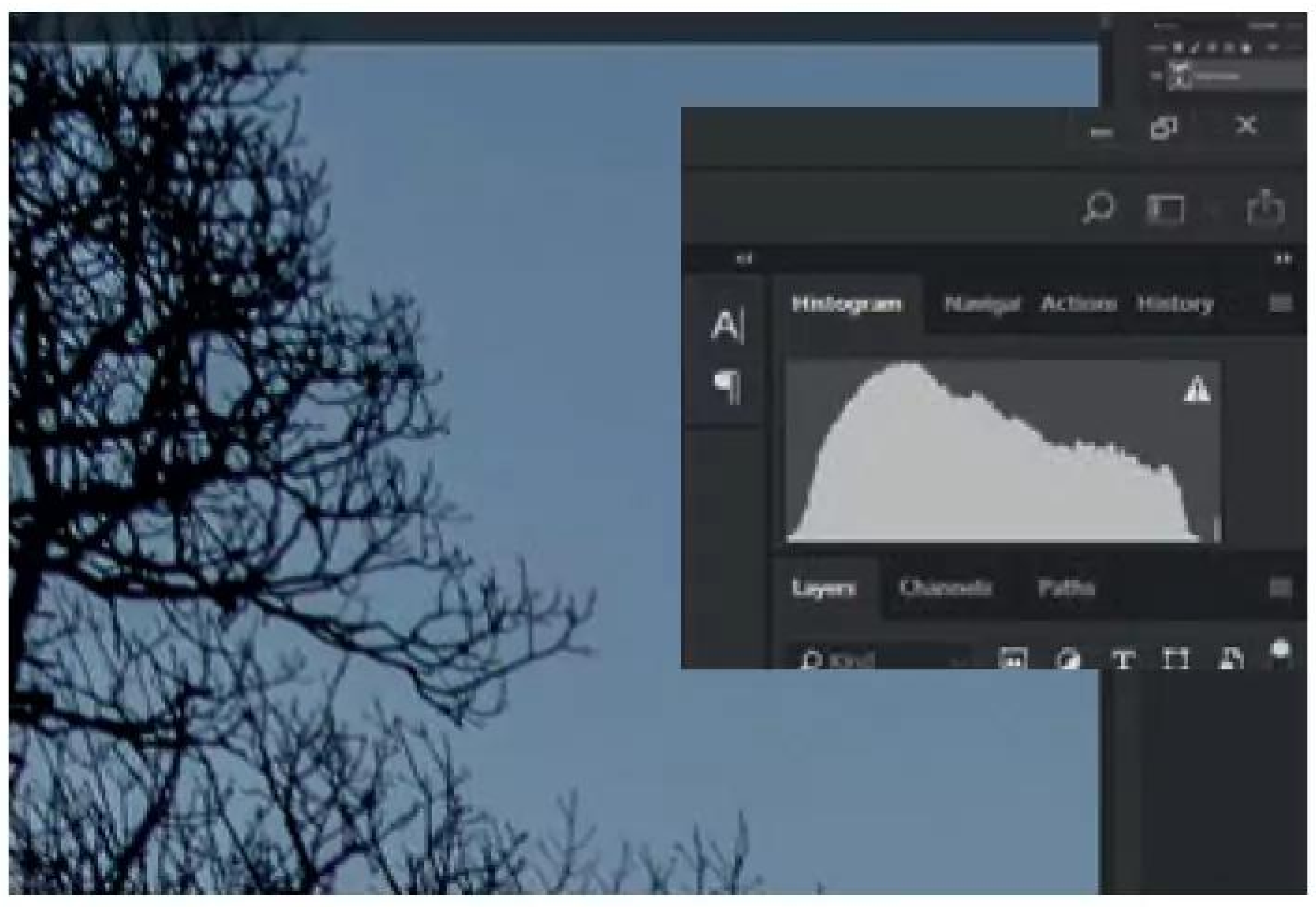
4 Auto-Blend Layers

On the Layers panel, the top Layer will be active and highlighted. Hold Shift and left mouse click on the bottom Layer so all are highlighted. Next, go to Edit>Auto-Blend Layers and Photoshop will automatically identify Stack Images. Make sure Seamless Tones and Colors is checked, but be sure that Content Aware Fill Transparent Areas isn't.



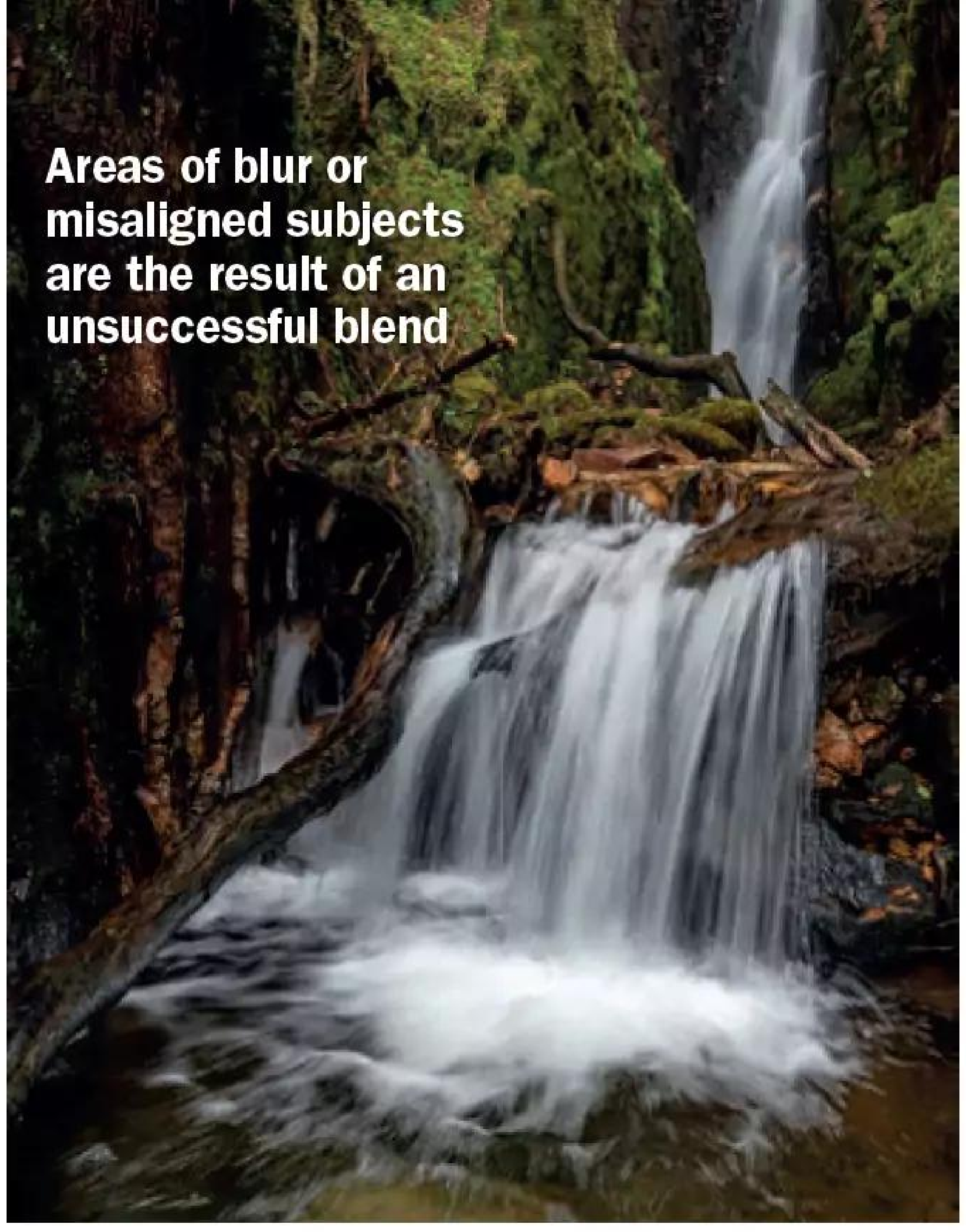
5 Check for errors

Zoom into the image and move around looking for any anomalies. There are times when Photoshop fails to blend images correctly, and problem areas will show blur or misalignment of elements in the scene. If this occurs you can often simply create a New Layer and clone out the errors, but if the errors are too difficult to fix use the guide on the right.



6 Crop and Flatten

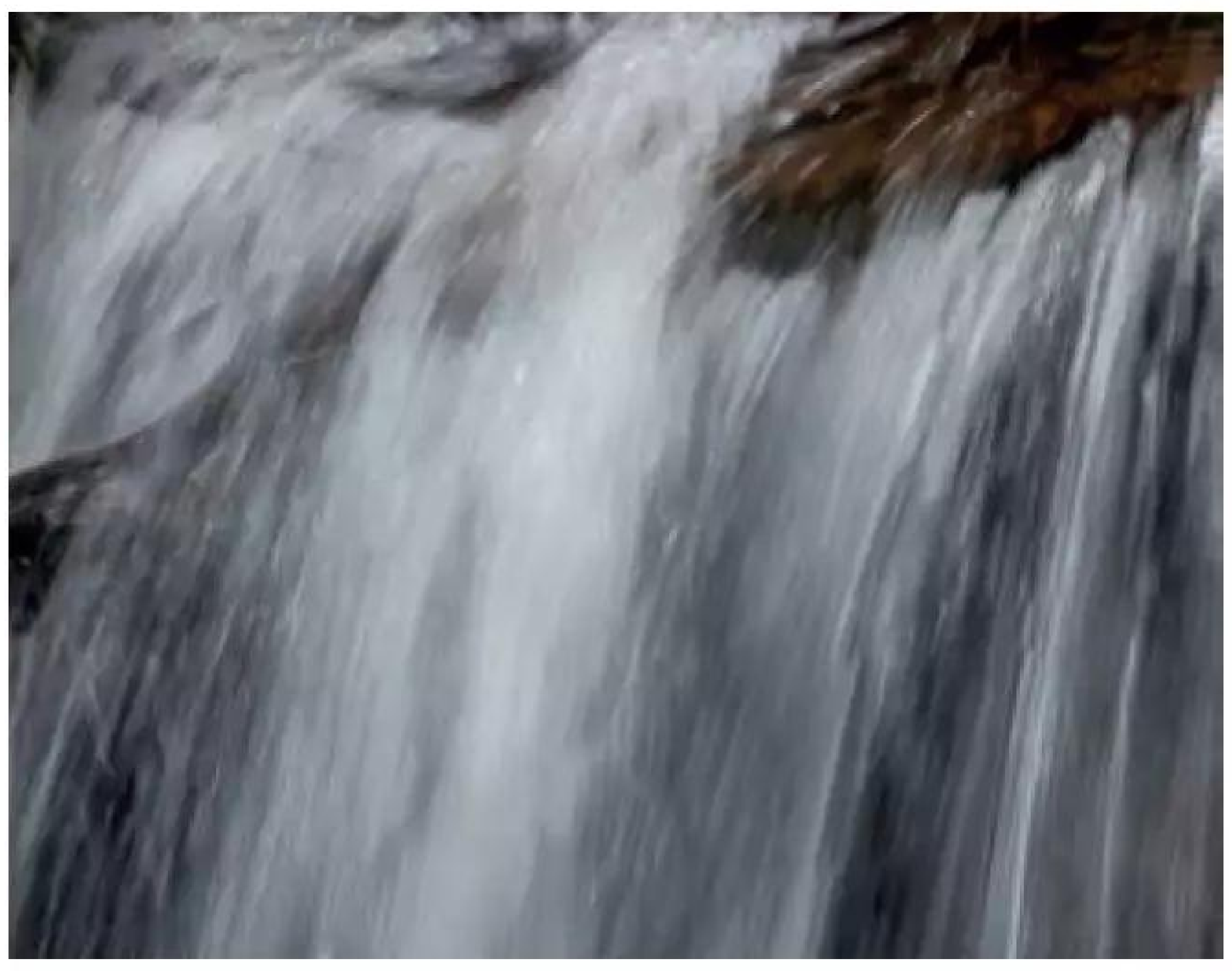
Flatten the Stacked image Layers by clicking on the menu represented by four horizontal lines at the top right of the Layers panel. Now you can apply any additional adjustments. Once all editing has been completed you can convert the TIFF to 8-bit and save the images with all images intact, or save as a JPEG if you no longer need Adjustment Layers, etc.



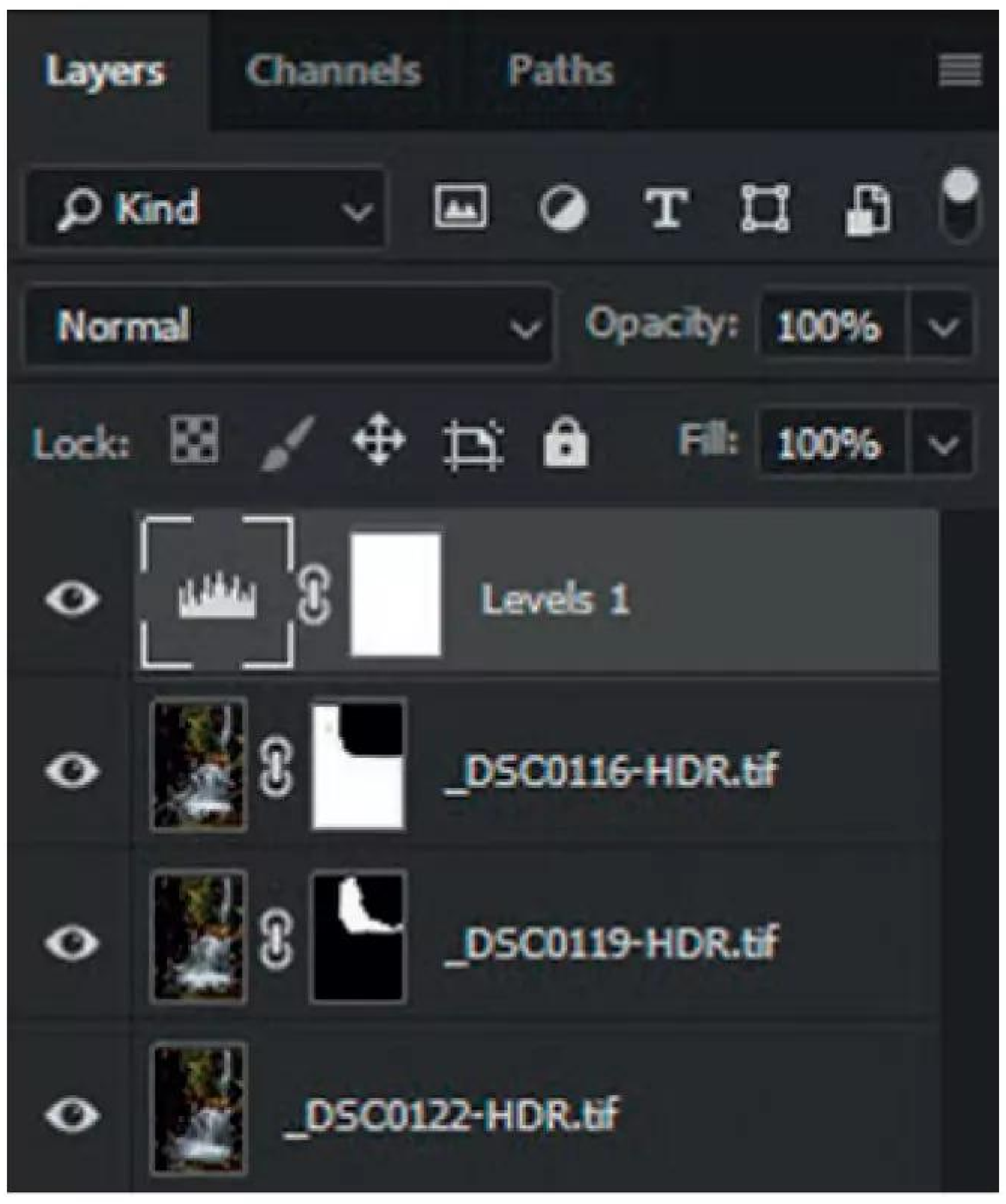
Areas of blur or misaligned subjects are the result of an unsuccessful blend

When Photoshop fails

There will always be times where the automated blending processes applied by Photoshop gets things wrong, and the result is a mismatched blending of the source images. This may appear as areas of blur or misaligned subjects, which is what happened with the waterfall. In these situations you can sometimes flatten the image and clone out the offending areas, but if this isn't possible you'll need to do a manual blend. To do this you'll need to load images into a stack with alignment checked. Then using Layer Masks you can mask in the sharp areas. This is, of course, more complicated, but something you may need to do.



To ensure a smooth blend you may have to do it manually using Layers and Layer Masks



Layers | Channels | Paths

Kind

Normal | Opacity: 100%

Lock: | Fill: 100%

Levels 1

_DSC0116-HDR.tif

_DSC0119-HDR.tif

_DSC0122-HDR.tif

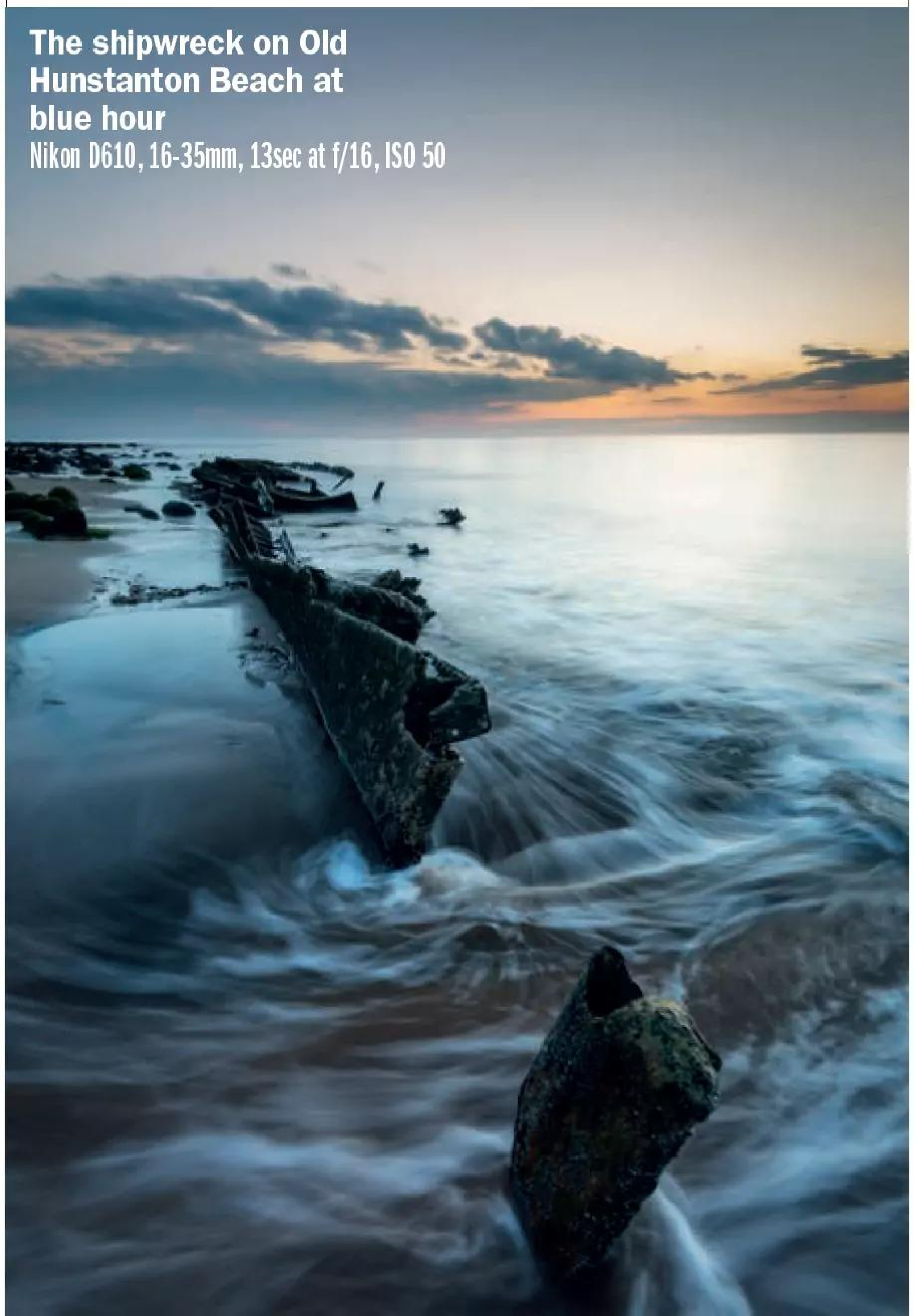
Advanced approaches to stacking

Big Stopper stacking

Extreme long exposures are hugely popular, so you might be glad to hear that you can also focus stack long-exposure shots. The downside, however, is that with exposures beyond 2min and/or in changeable light, blending the images becomes trickier. Some cameras can 'see' through and even autofocus through Big Stoppers and other long-exposure filters, so with these you can shoot using AF and live view. If your camera is unable to do this, set the three, four or five points of focus with no filter attached and make a note of the distance for each shot. Now, with the filter attached you can manually focus at the correct point using the distance scale on the lens.

Shutter-speed focus stacking

The more you shoot focus-stacked images, the more confident, proficient and experimental you'll become. This image was taken with the camera on soft wet sand, so shooting several images at different focus points wasn't working with a sinking tripod. Instead, a depth-of-field image was shot at f/16 to get everything sharp to acceptably sharp at the back, and a second shot was then taken at f/4 to allow for a faster shutter speed to capture dynamic movement in the tide. The focus point for this second shot was changed to the front of the boat and was sharper here than the f/16 version. These images then had to be focus stacked manually using Layer Masks in Photoshop.

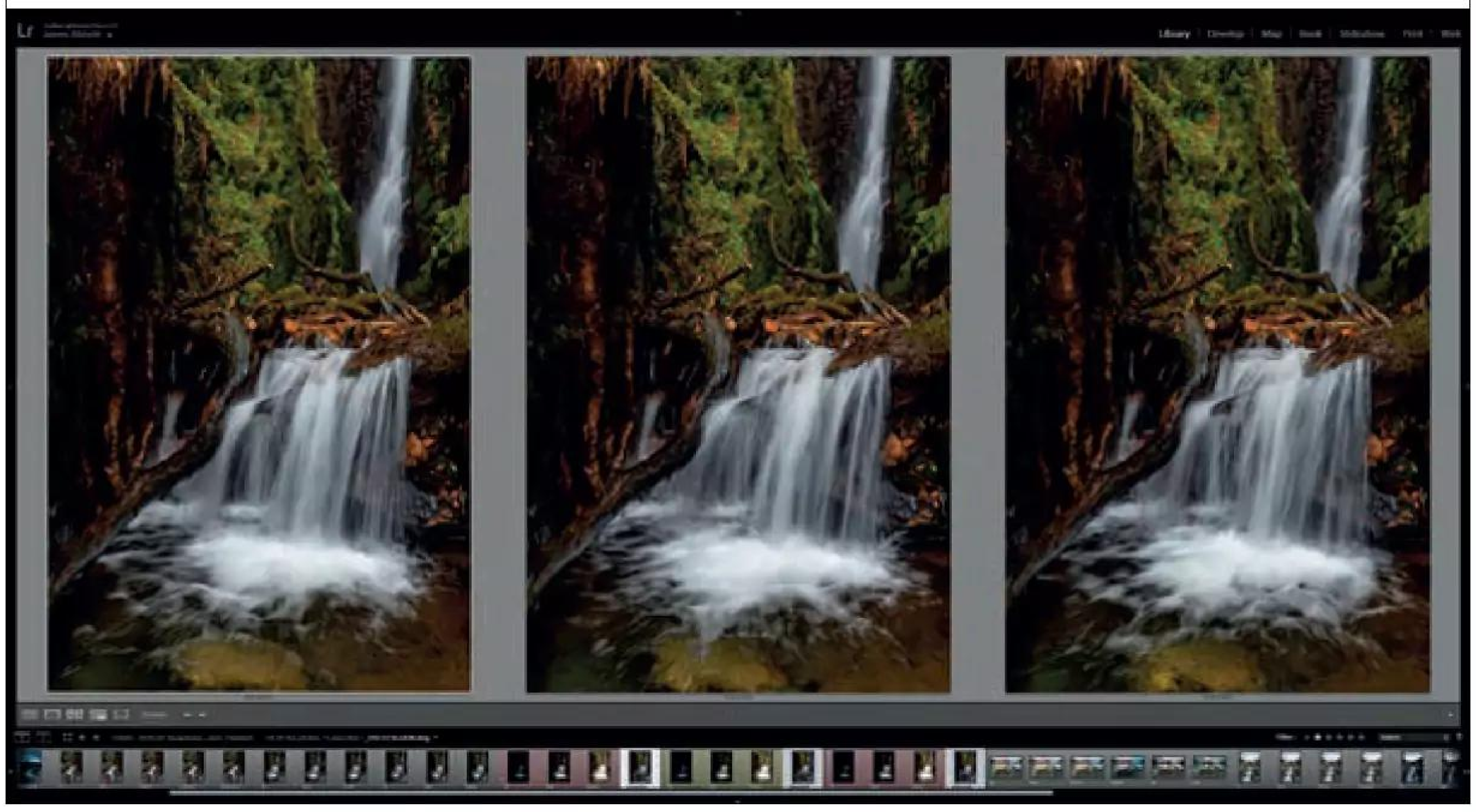


The shipwreck on Old Hunstanton Beach at blue hour
Nikon D610, 16-35mm, 13sec at f/16, ISO 50

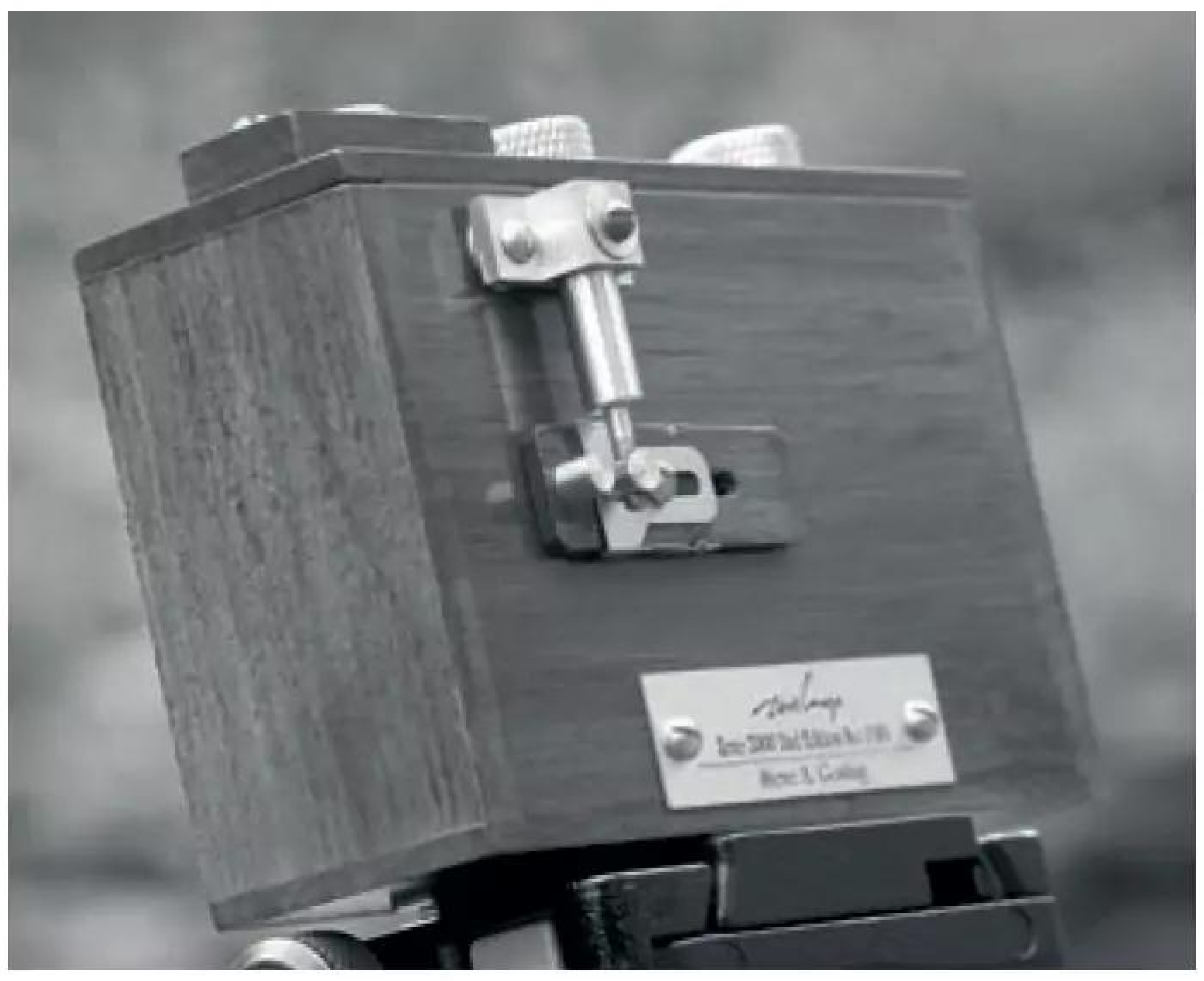
Long exposure at Blea Tarn in the Lake District
Sony Alpha 7R III, 16-35mm, 77sec at f/11, ISO 100

HDR focus stacking

If you fancy a real shooting and editing challenge, HDR focus stacking is a technique that will put your skills to the ultimate test. For this, it's best to use Auto Exposure bracketing set to three images at two-stop increments. For the focus stacking side of things, three focus planes are best to keep the total number of images to nine. Take a set of three bracketed exposures at each focus point. You then have to blend each set of three exposures into a single HDR image, with the resulting three HDR images being merged together using the technique on the previous pages.



Focus stacking allows you to make the most of dramatic foreground interest
Nikon D610, 16-35mm, 1.3sec at f/16, ISO 100



The handmade wooden and brass Zero 2000 pinhole camera that Steve bought from a manufacturer in Hong Kong (see zeroimage.com)

© STEVE GOSLING

Lensless landscapes

By Steve Gosling

To celebrate Worldwide Pinhole Photography Day, **Hollie Latham Hucker** talks to Steve Gosling about his passion for the art

As a photographer who continually strives to push the creative boundaries in his work, Steve set himself a new challenge that allowed him to approach landscape scenes in a fresh and unique way. This image of the iconic Durdle Door arch in Dorset is one of many landscapes taken on a Zero 2000 pinhole camera. What initially started out as a bit of fun, quickly resulted in articles, interviews, exhibitions and his book, *Lensless Landscapes*. He tells us, 'It wasn't driven by any commercial considerations; it was motivated simply by my interest in exploring different creative approaches to keep my vision fresh.'

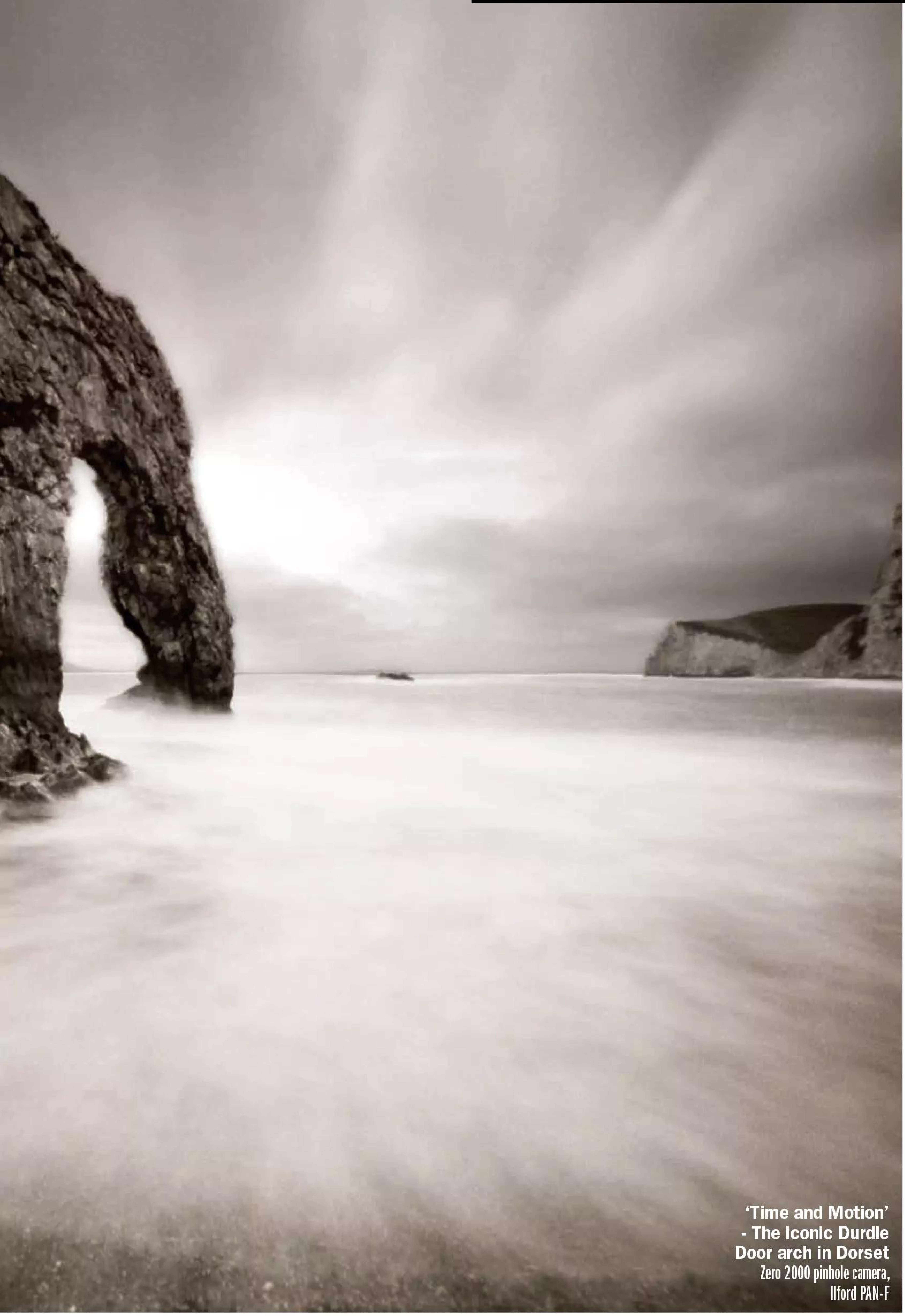
So without an exposure mode or LCD in sight, it was back to basics with a vengeance. When it came to choosing his new tool, Steve opted for a ready-built camera so he could start shooting immediately. 'I've met photographers who have made pinhole cameras from table-tennis balls, matchboxes and trash cans, but I've never been one for the DIY approach.' Steve chose the camera for its simple picture-making process. It has a device to enable a standard cable release to be fitted, a tripod mounting thread, built-in spirit level and an exposure calculator. 'All of these features help me to concentrate on the image, not the mechanics of taking it,' says Steve. 'As a landscape photographer I also wanted to avoid loading and unloading film in a darkroom or on location in a changing bag, so another reason for choosing it was it takes 120 roll film that can be loaded in daylight.'

This new tool not only presented Steve with the challenge of shooting manually, a stark contrast from the auto digital machines he'd grown accustomed to, but also his

© MURRAY MCMILLAN

Steve Gosling

Steve specialises in producing contemporary landscape and travel images and has been running workshops for over 20 years. His work has been widely published and exhibited in the UK and overseas. Steve is an Ambassador for Manfrotto, Gitzo and Permajet inkjet papers and works closely with Phase One and LEE Filters. See more of his work at **www.stevegoslingphotography.co.uk**



'Time and Motion' - The iconic Durdle Door arch in Dorset
Zero 2000 pinhole camera, Ilford PAN-F

Steve Gosling's book, *Lensless Landscapes*, can be purchased from his website at **www.stevegoslingphotography.co.uk**

approach to capturing scenes. As expected the early shoots were a case of trial and error until he became more familiar with the camera. 'For someone who works with cameras that have 100% viewfinders, I found it frustrating to just point the camera and shoot in hope.' The extreme wide angle of view also played havoc with Steve's compositions but with practice he learnt to adapt.

Steve was soon thriving from this new way of shooting. 'Working with a simple wooden box allowed me to put the camera in situations that might prove damaging to a modern electronic marvel.' At this popular location, Steve was able to approach it with a new vision. 'As I stood on the beach, I was struck by how the elements had shaped the landscape – the wind and sea had combined over time to carve out the arch. It was a windy day and I felt that this raw, elemental scene contained energy and a dynamism that I wanted to capture in a single frame.' With the wide angle of view in mind, he positioned himself on the edge of the incoming water. 'I knew that the resulting exposure of several seconds would give a sense of the sea rushing towards me and reveal the movement of the windblown clouds in the sky. My hope was the image would communicate the restless nature of this amazing landscape.'

The combination of the wide angle of view, infinite depth of field and the softness produced from long exposures that record not one but a succession of decisive moments made a lasting impact on Steve's approach.

'My experience with pinhole has led me to apply many characteristics of this style to my other work. I now regularly shoot with wideangle lenses on my Phase One and Olympus cameras and use ND filters for long exposures.'

Steve has tried to experiment with pinhole adapters on digital cameras to combine the aspects of lensless image-making with the convenience and flexibility of digital photography. He tells us, 'One of the advantages of using mirrorless cameras is that the adapters can be recessed into the body of the camera – placing the pinhole closer to the sensor in this way gives the more extreme wideangle view I was used to with my film pinhole camera. This enables me to best photograph the dramatic nature of the landscape – making the most of bold foregrounds and an infinite depth of field.'

Heavenly

Auroras, star trails and the moon – **Matty Graham** shares expert tips for taking out-of-this-world shots of these popular subjects

Photographers who have enjoyed a long hot summer, complete with endless hours of sunny days and golden sunsets, may be letting out an extended sigh at the prospect of it now being dark by dinner time. However, while it may pose challenges for photographers, the night sky presents wonderful opportunities to capture celestial phenomenon and get creative with Mother Nature.

Accessibility to fast-aperture lenses at more reasonable prices and advancements in sensor technology means your camera can capture everything from auroras to star trails with greater quality than ever before. What's more, raw files containing more tonal information will also enable you to enhance your after-dark images so you no longer have to fight a constant battle with digital grain.

To show you just how accessible astrophotography can be, in this article we're taking on three celestial projects to explain the technique needed to produce a stunning photo, along with the equipment to make the shoot easier, and some processing tips to add that final polish.

Matty Graham

Matty specialises in landscape, travel and automotive photography. Having worked in the photography and publishing industry for over 15 years, he supplies images and features for many leading brands and titles.

www.mattygraham.com

UNLESS STATED OTHERWISE, ALL PICTURES © MATTY GRAHAM

The impressive light display in Lofoten, Norway
Canon EOS 6D, 17-40mm, 10sec at f/4, ISO 1600

HOW TO SHOOT AURORAS

WITH AN aurora shoot you are at the mercy of a number of factors. So let's start by explaining what causes the aurora borealis, also known as the Northern Lights.

The amazing lights start their journey at the sun, and are produced when solar storms send gusts of charged particles towards the earth's atmosphere. When the particles react with the earth's magnetic field, light is created (typically green, but also red, blue and violet) and these displays can last from a few seconds to over an hour.

Even if there is strong solar activity, other factors play a role when it comes to getting the best possible results. A clear night sky is required, and it's important to find shooting locations with low levels of light pollution. In addition, a high latitude is advantageous. While you can shoot the aurora in the UK as far south as Lincolnshire, travelling to Northern-Lights hotspots like Iceland or Norway's Arctic Circle area will reward you with more impressive displays. Nonetheless, there's still more you can do to better plan your aurora adventure.

Smartphone apps

A smartphone can be a useful accessory when hunting down the lights, with the aurora season running roughly between September and April. Weather apps will forecast cloud cover while dedicated aurora apps will do their best to predict the strength and timings of any displays using solar storm data. While there's a wealth of apps available, I use AuroraWatch UK for UK-centric information and My Aurora Forecast while shooting further north in Norway and the Faroe Islands.

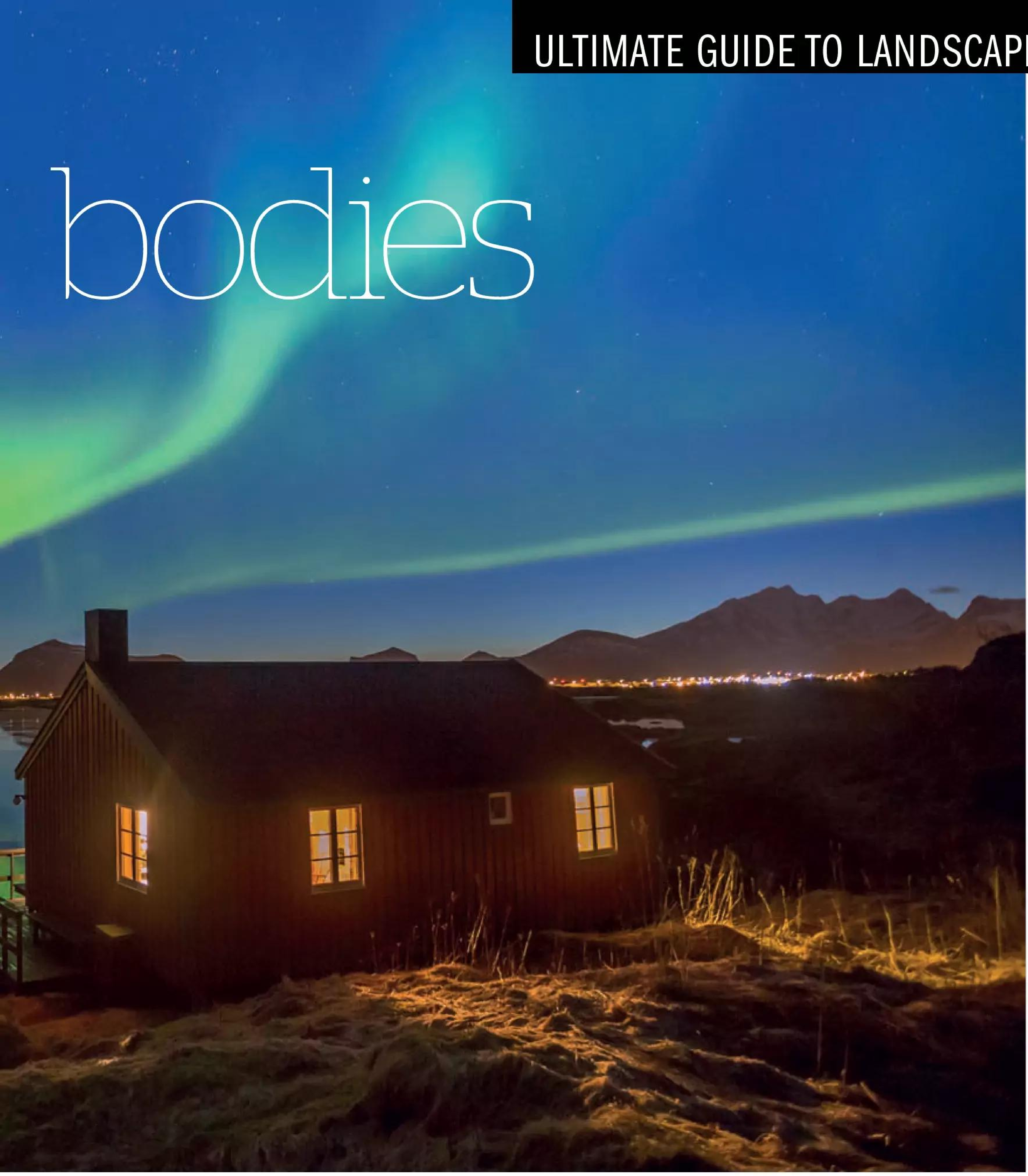
One common mistake photographers make is to pick a location and hope the aurora drifts into view. If you have transport available, I find that searching out the light in different locations can be a better approach.

AF MF
STABILIZER
ON OFF
EOS 7D

1 Manual focus

With the camera on a sturdy tripod, the best approach is to switch your lens to manual focus (MF) and use live view to zoom in and focus precisely. Remember to switch off any image stabilisation as this can be counter-productive with the camera on a tripod.

bodies



KIT LIST

Head torch

Shooting after dark means you need to take safety seriously. An essential item of kit is a head torch. If possible, pack one with a red light as this won't affect your night vision as much as a white LED light would.

◀ Remote release

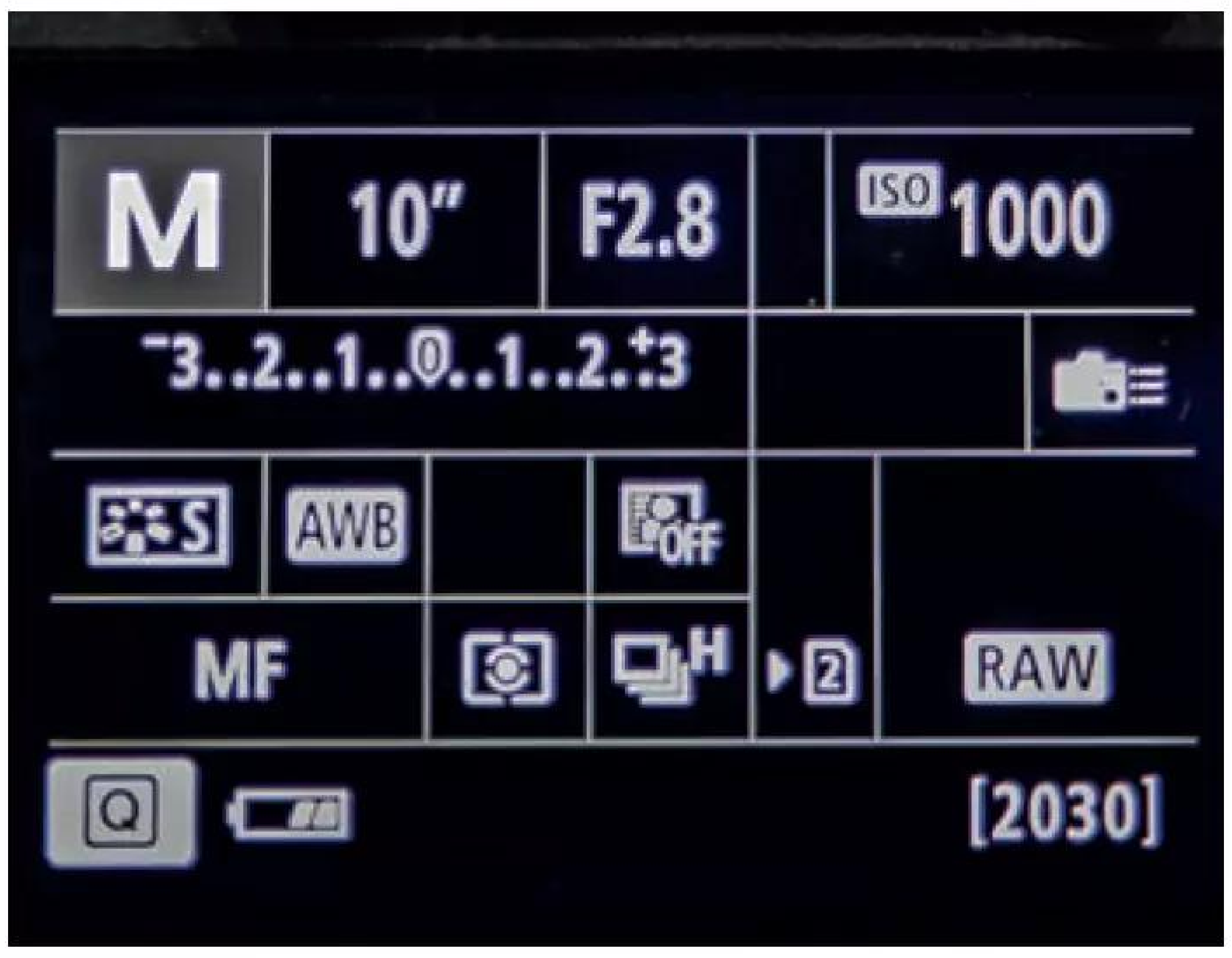
To avoid knocking the camera, use a remote-release cable or a radio trigger. The camera's self-timer mode will also allow time for any vibrations to dampen before triggering the shutter.

Tripod ▶

With long-exposure times, you will need a tripod to capture a sharp image. Temperatures will be cold, so either use a tripod with foam surround on the leg sections or add some DIY foam yourself to save your hands from freezing.

2 Use a remote release

Connect a remote release or a radio trigger to avoid touching the camera during the exposure. Select the raw file format to give you more tolerance when editing the image. Your exposure will depend on the ambient light and how strong the aurora is.



3 Dial in your settings

A good starting point is to select an ISO of around 1000, an aperture between f/2.8 and f/4, and a shutter speed below 15 seconds to avoid any movement of the stars in the frame. Take a test shot and adjust the exposure settings if your image is too light or dark.

4 Don't forget about framing

It's a good idea to experiment with focal lengths – using a 70-200mm and zooming in can deliver great detail shots. Going wide can capture the full scale of the aurora, but just remember to be considerate with your foreground.

An all-star challenge

A starry sky can be transformed into a swirly trail using nothing more than a sturdy tripod and some clever photo-editing

STAR-TRAIL photography has become increasingly popular in recent years owing to a number of factors. First up is the accessibility to reasonably priced, fast-aperture lenses and cameras that can perform at increased ISO levels. Second, photography is often trend-led, and image-sharing sites have seen no end of inspiring star trails plastered over social media and image-sharing websites such as Flickr and 500px. In short, star-trail photography is cool.

One of the misconceptions about this form of astrophotography is that, like shooting auroras, you have to debunk to a dark-sky area miles away from civilisation to stand any chance of capturing a successful frame. Well, the truth is that you can actually shoot a star trail from the comfort of your back garden – all you need is a clear sky, a tripod and a slice of technique. Many photographers choose to include foreground but another approach is to make the trail the sole subject in the frame, and even zoom in closer to the sky to create abstract swirls within the image.

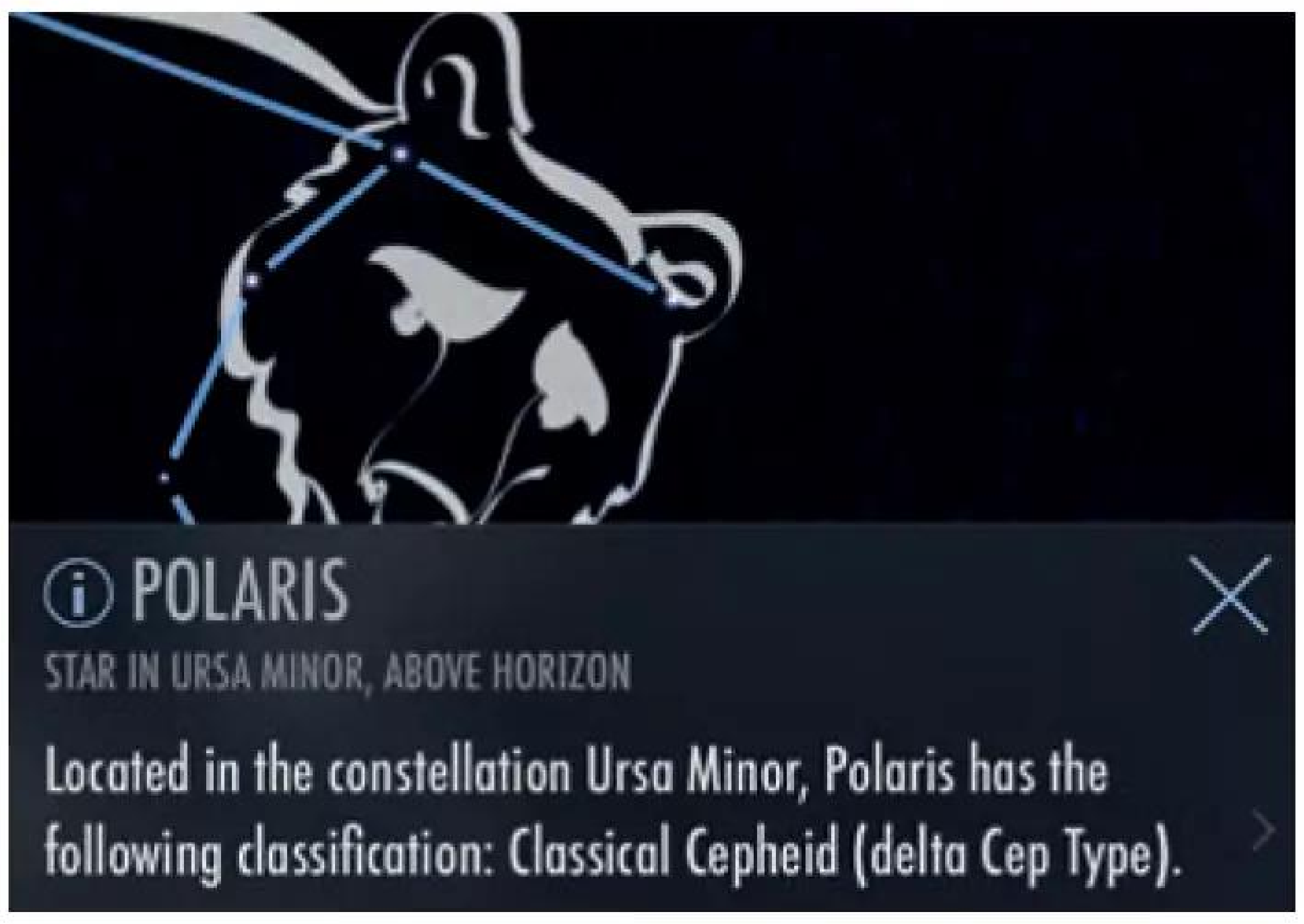
The practicalities

Wherever you shoot star-trail images, some practicalities should be observed. Make sure you have a head torch to hand so you can see what you're doing with the camera. Place your tripod on an area of grass and you'll be amazed at how the dew will climb from the grass up your tripod legs, especially on warmer evenings. Remember as well that you're going to be locked down to one location for a while as you capture multiple exposures, so it could pay to take along a flask of tea to keep warm.

There are actually two ways to shoot a star trail. The first involves shooting one continuous exposure with the shutter locked open. This isn't great though as noise can be more of a problem and if you accidentally knock the tripod an hour into the exposure, your picture will be ruined. Instead, shooting multiple files, editing one using Lightroom before syncing the adjustments to the rest of the files, and then merging them together using StarStaX software is a more commonly used method.

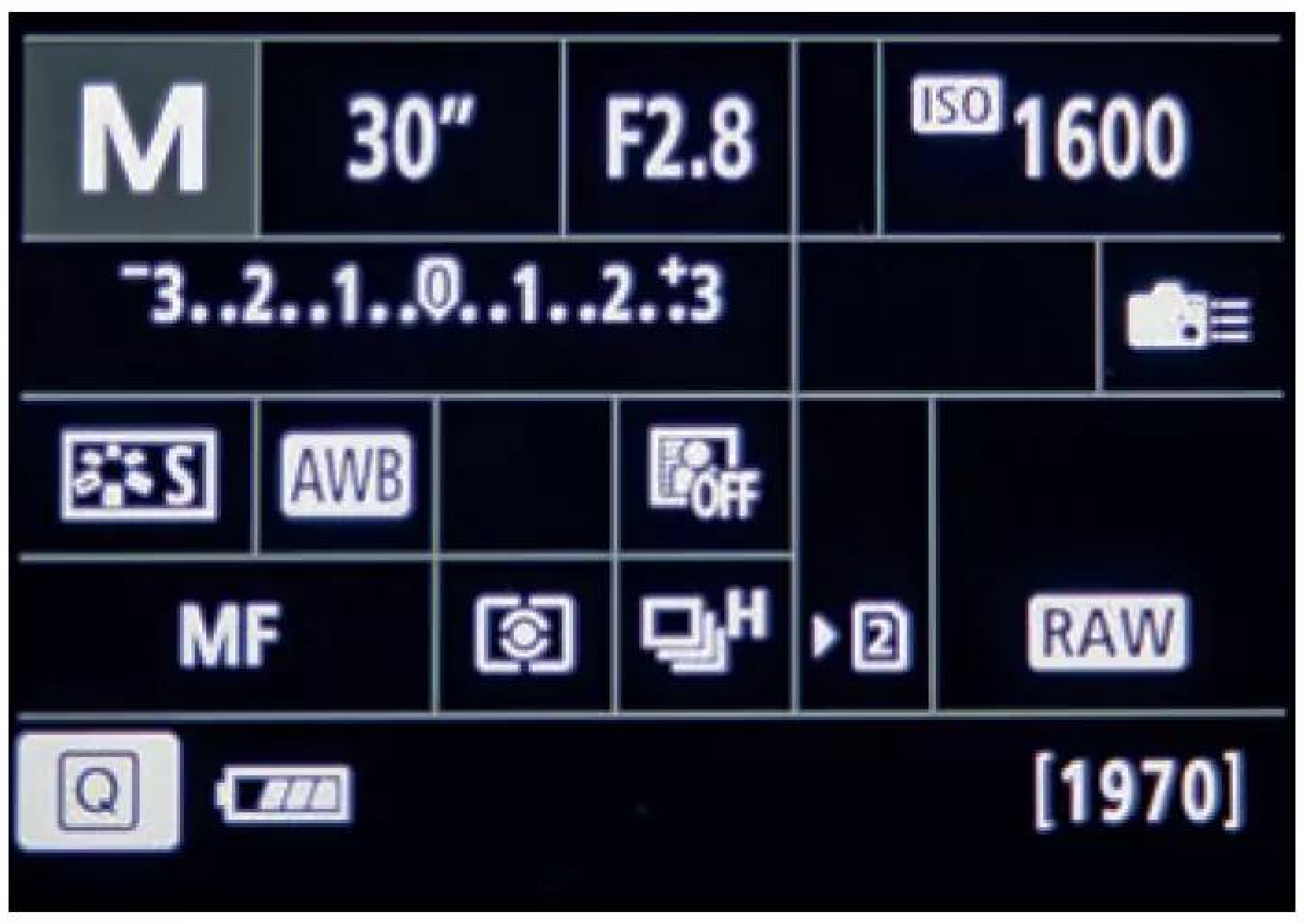
Star-trail photography is becoming increasingly popular; it requires combining a sequence of shots taken over an hour

GET SET UP FOR STAR TRAILS


POLARIS
STAR IN URSA MINOR, ABOVE HORIZON
Located in the constellation Ursa Minor, Polaris has the following classification: Classical Cepheid (delta Cep Type).

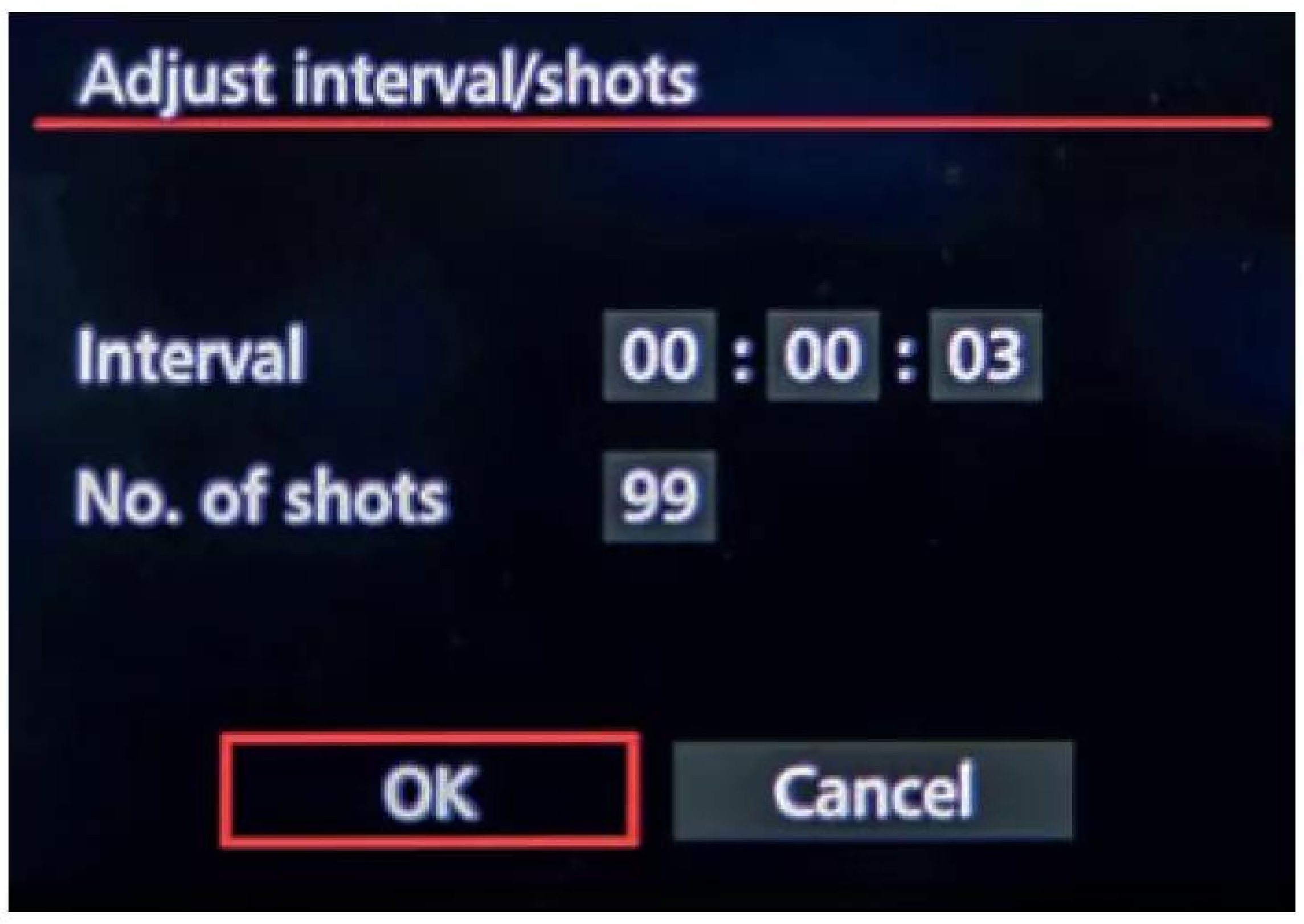
1 Compose the scene

With the camera on the tripod, set focus to manual (MF) and use the live view and magnify function to ensure the stars are in focus. If you want to include the centre of the star trial, you'll need to include the North Star in your frame, which can be quickly found using an AR app like SkyLite.


M 30" F2.8 ISO 1600
-3..2..1..0..1..2.+3
AWB
MF
RAW
[1970]

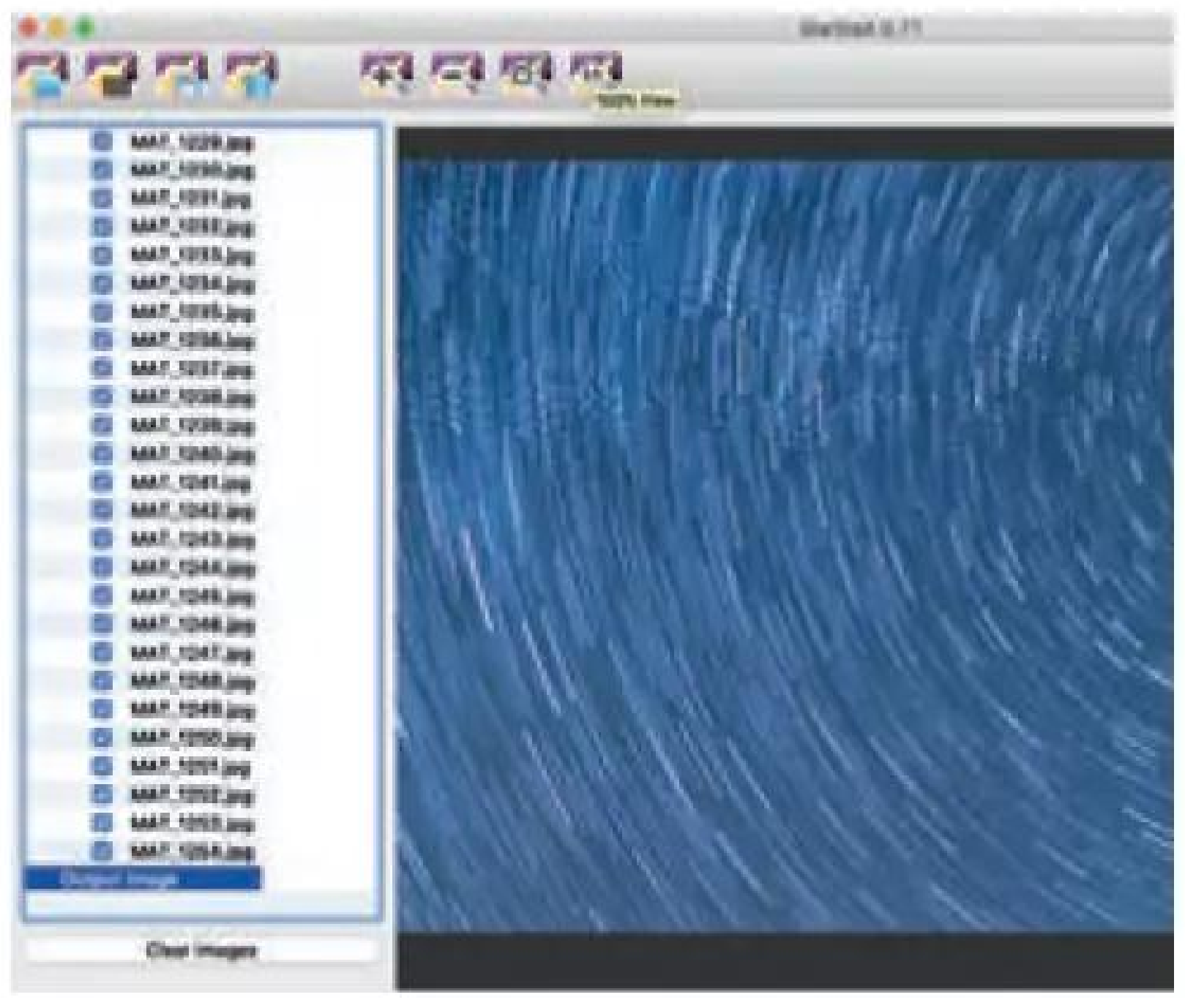
2 Camera settings

Next, select manual mode and dial in an exposure of 30sec at f/2.8 (or whatever your lens's maximum aperture is). The aim is to keep the ISO as low as possible, so take a test shot at ISO 1600 and dip the ISO as low as possible while ensuring the stars are clearly visible in the frame.


Adjust interval/shots
Interval 00 : 00 : 03
No. of shots 99

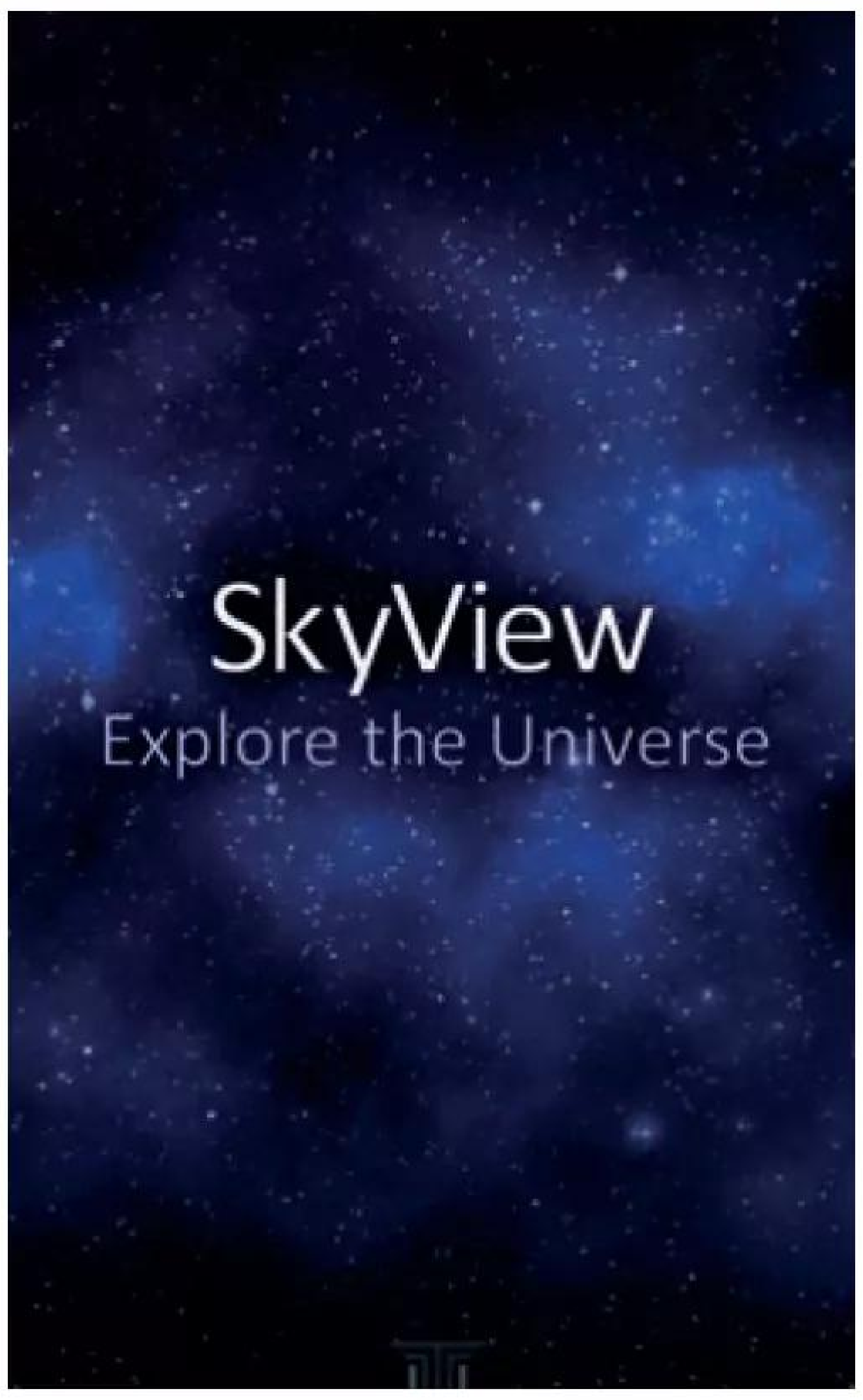
3 Adjust intervals

Use the camera's interval mode to make it shoot one image after another, or add a compatible remote release that will do the same job. Make sure the battery is fully charged and format the memory card. Shoot for at least 45 minutes, but longer sequences of 1-2 hours can yield better results.

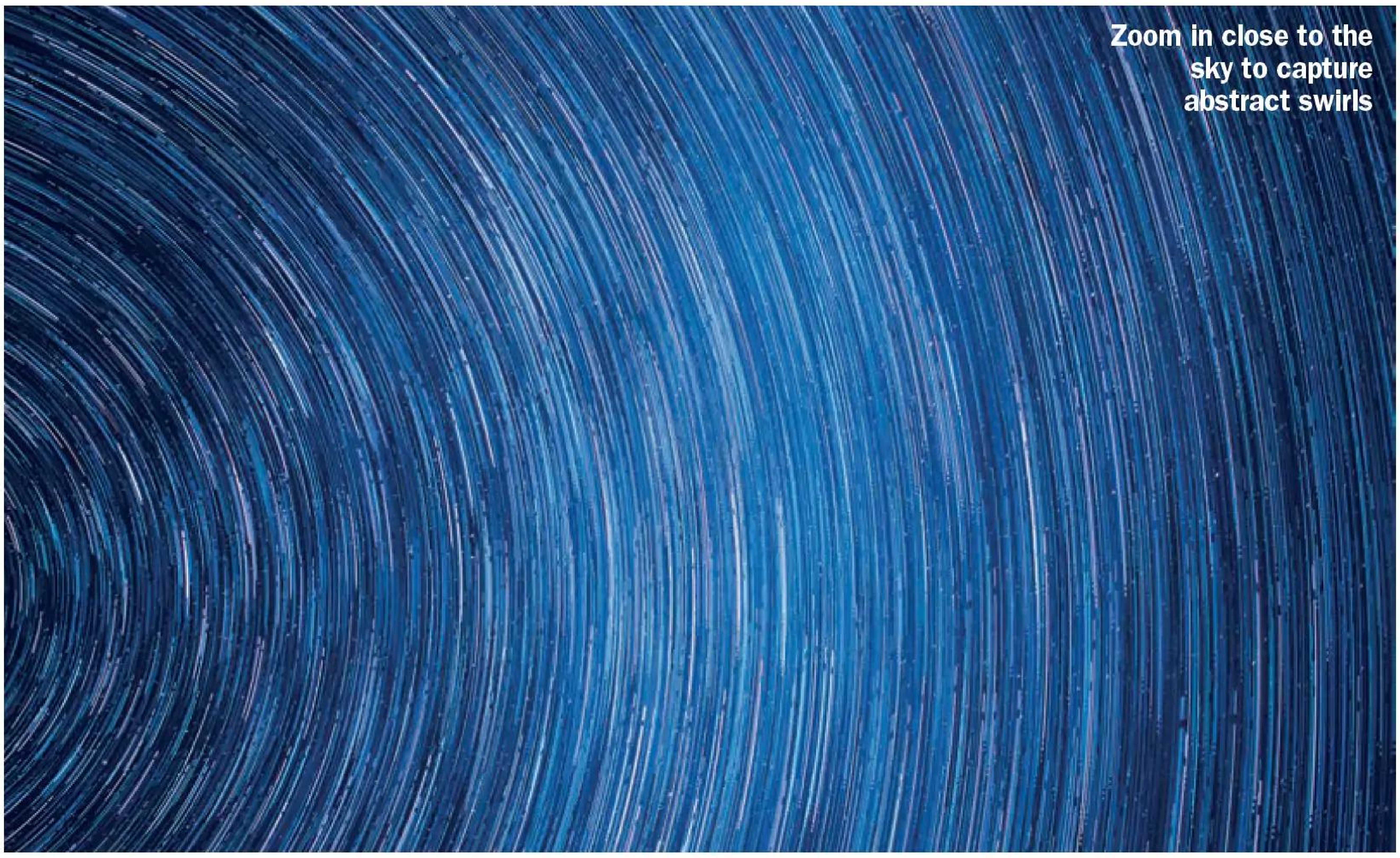


What is StarStaX?

Type 'starstax' into Google and it will take you to Markus Enzweiler's website (markus-enzweiler.de). He developed the software and makes it freely available to Mac and Windows users. All you have to do is drop your star-trails sequence files onto the interface and click 'Start Processing' and the software merges the files together. To complete the process, you simply save the final image and you're done. StarStaX is certainly the quickest and easiest software option, but there is an alternative. You can use Photoshop to merge the files together, either manually or by creating a bespoke action. The technique consists of copying and pasting each file onto one starting image, changing each Layer's Blending Mode to Lighten. If your image has foreground interest, keep the bottom Layer's Blending Mode as Normal.



The SkyView app is a stargazing app that uses your camera to spot and identify stars and constellations



Zoom in close to the sky to capture abstract swirls

Capture a close-up of the moon to reveal the tones and textures of its surface Nikon D800, 80-400mm, 1/250sec at f/8, ISO 200

Shoot for the moon

Whether as a stand-alone subject or used in a wider landscape, the pull of the moon is strong for photographers

MANKIND'S fascination with the moon is undeniable and this celestial wonder presents plenty of opportunities for photographers. From close-ups and wider landscapes to more special occurrences like eclipses, the moon can be a useful source of illumination for a night-time scene or a spectacularly detailed subject waiting to be captured.

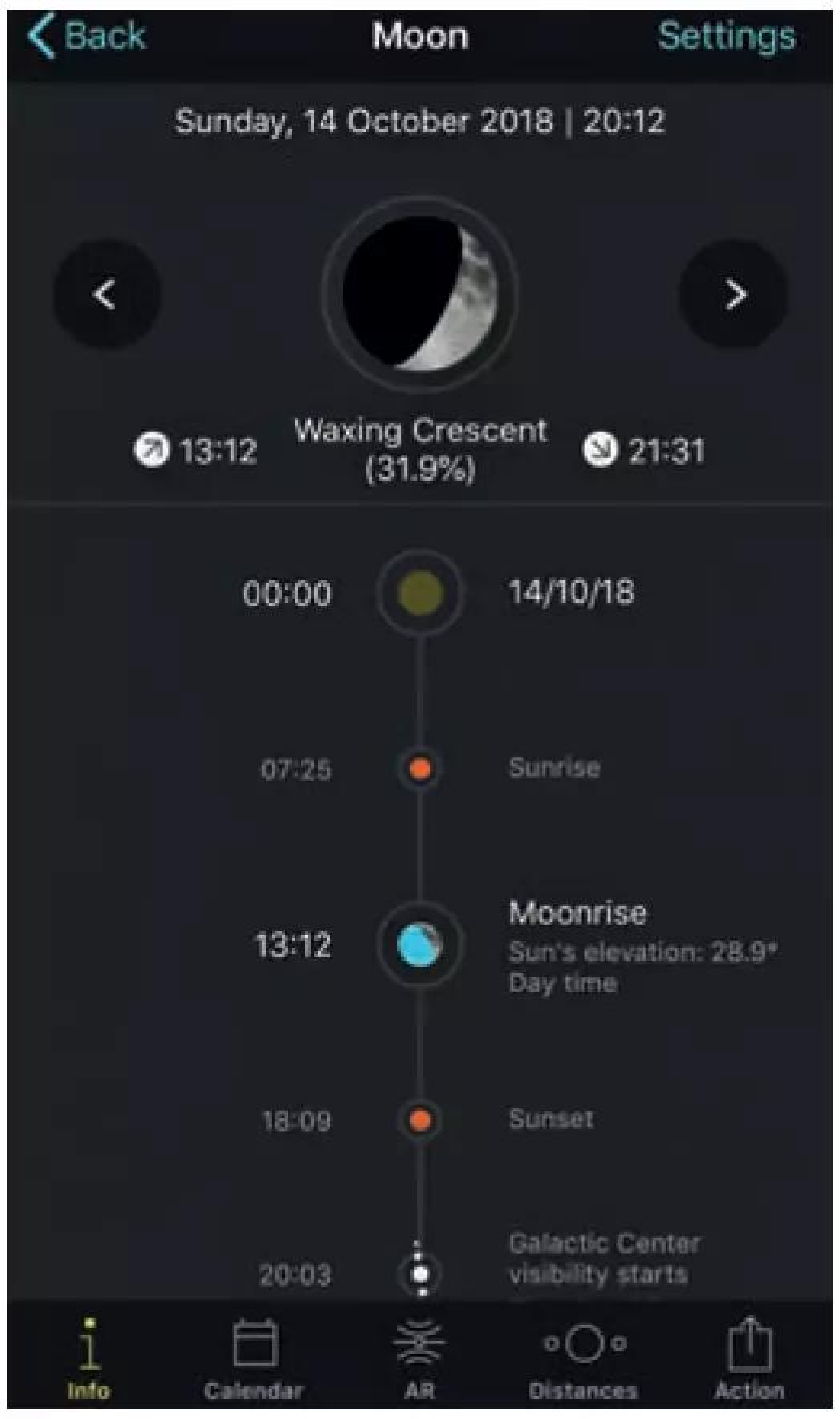
Like the Northern Lights and star trails, though, nothing with astrophotography is ever that straightforward, and in this case, photographers are at the mercy of not only weather and light pollution, but also the moon's cycle. Again, research time can be slashed by using an app like PhotoPills, which will enable you to plan ahead and not only know exactly when is moonrise in a certain location, but pinpoint the exact phase and percentage of the moon that will be visible as well.

A crescent moon makes a great shot Nikon D800, 80-400mm, 1/200sec at f/5.6, ISO 800

Pitfalls

Two common pitfalls that photographers make when capturing images that include the moon are the focal length needed for a decent close-up and just how bright the light from the moon can be. Let's start with focal length; it's generally accepted that the minimum focal length needed to capture an image that will show real detail on the moon is between 300-400mm. This is where crop-sensor cameras have an advantage, giving a higher effective focal length (1.5x Nikon, 1.6x Canon), but there is another option. Pairing your lens with an affordable teleconverter will give you even further reach – in fact, a 70-200mm used at its long end on a APS-C Canon camera that's paired with a 1.4x teleconverter affords the photographer a maximum focal length of 448mm. Remember, DSLRs or mirrorless cameras aren't the only option when it comes to capturing pictures of the moon. Superzoom cameras such as Nikon's Coolpix P1000 features a 125x optical zoom, giving an amazing focal length of 24-3000mm!

Photographers can struggle to balance ambient light in the scene with the bright light of the moon. Shooting during twilight as darkness is still falling can be a good solution as there will be less difference in light levels between the moon and the rest of your scene. What's more, the moon will be lower in the sky, allowing you to frame up more imaginative compositions, such as the moon placed in the arch of a bell tower. All that bright light from the moon can be used to your advantage, however, as it can provide illumination for a wider landscape scene that would have otherwise been dark or needed an ultra-long exposure.



Sunday, 14 October 2018 | 20:12

13:12 Waxing Crescent (31.9%) 21:31

00:00 14/10/18

07:25 Sunrise

13:12 Moonrise Sun's elevation: 28.9° Day time

18:09 Sunset

20:03 Galactic Center visibility starts

Use the PhotoPills app to plan your photo shoot accurately

When shooting the Milky Way, keep the shutter speed below 30 seconds to prevent stars from turning into trails
Nikon D750, 14mm, 10sec at f/2.8, ISO 10000

© GETTY IMAGES/MIKE WILSON

How to shoot the Milky Way

THE MILKY Way is one of the most magical subjects in the night sky and, although photographing it may seem daunting, some solid photographic technique could unlock this stunning scene and result in spectacular captures to be proud of.

Finding the Milky Way can be quite straightforward. Head to an area of low-light pollution and use an app such as PhotoPills to view the Milky Way via Augmented Reality, as this will drastically cut down your set-up time and will help you to frame a successful composition.

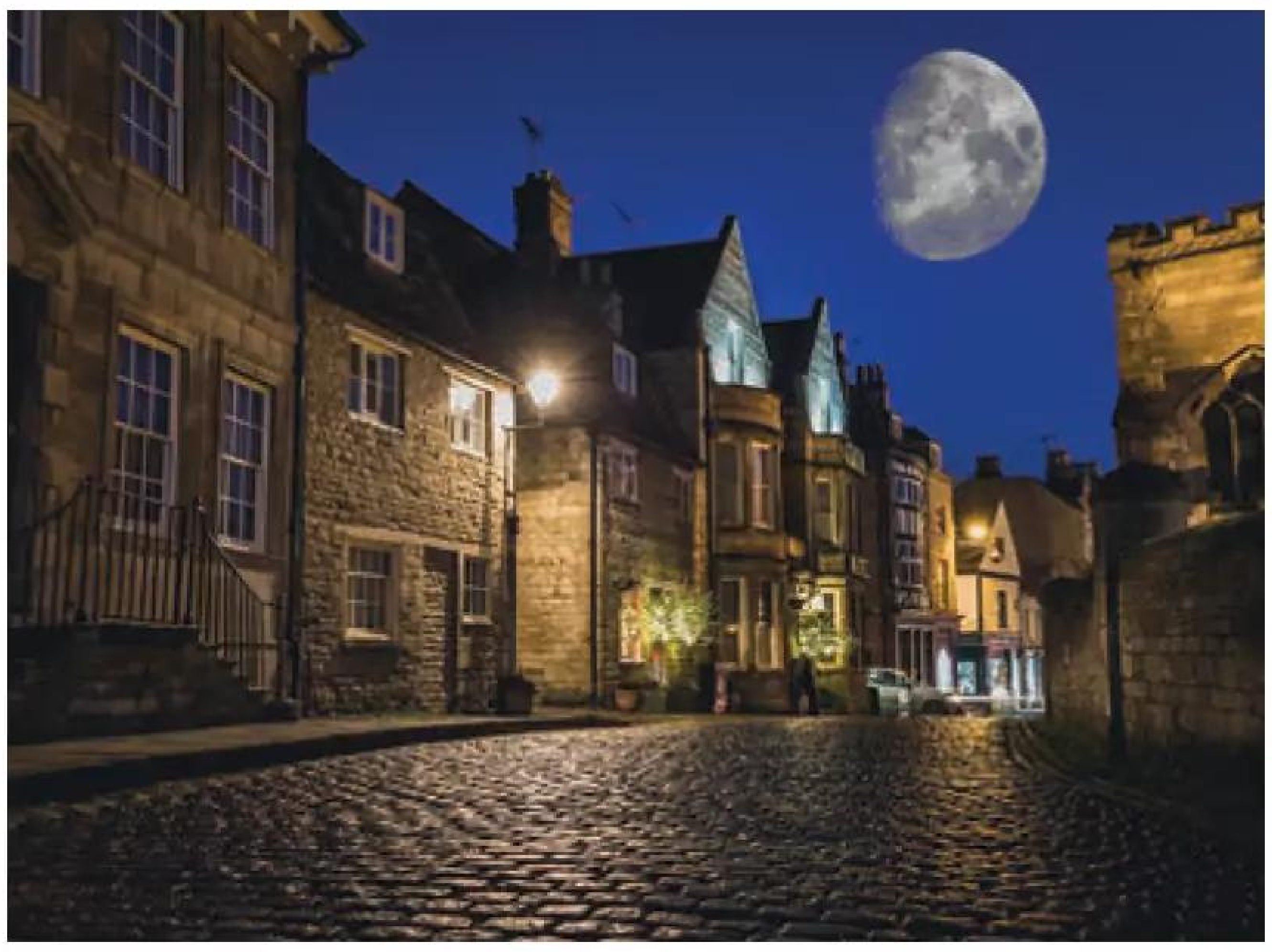
Select a wide, fast-aperture lens, such as a 16-35mm f/2.8, and place the camera on a tripod to keep it steady. Switch to manual mode and dial in a starting exposure of 30 seconds at f/2.8, ISO 1600 before adjusting the ISO to account for light levels. The aim should be to control the exposure by keeping the shutter speed at or below 30 seconds to prevent any stars from turning into trails.

Some photographers use the '500' Rule, where 500 is divided by the lens' focal length. Using this method will give you the maximum shutter speed you can use before stars turn to trails.

If you are planning to shoot a lot of astrophotography, the Pentax K-1 is a good camera choice as, not only does the camera offer 36 megapixels of resolution, but it also boasts an astro-tracer feature that follows the movement of the stars so you can achieve sharper imagery.

TAKE SOME CREATIVE LICENCE

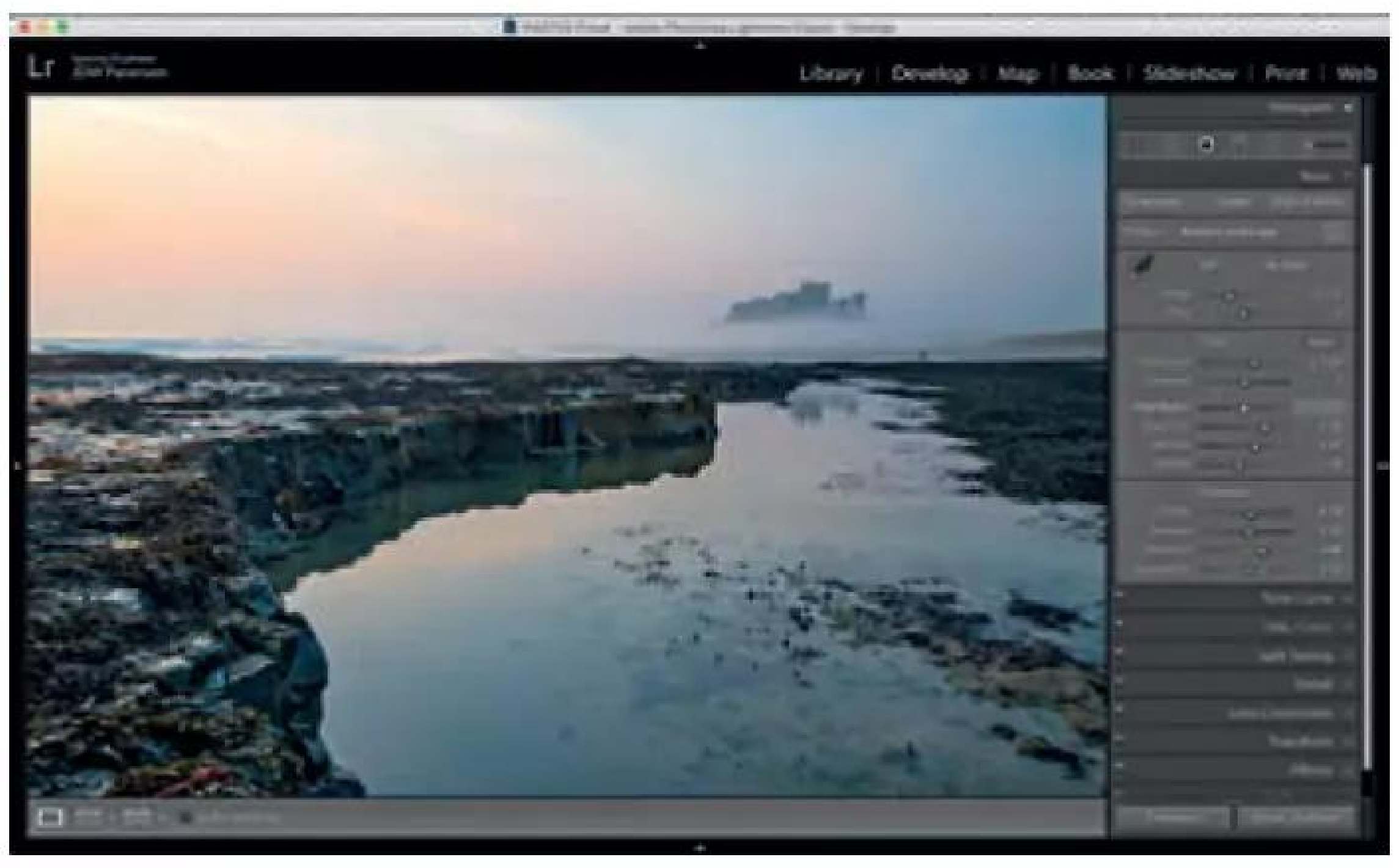
PHOTOGRAPHY purists look away now! For more creative images, you could always try merging your close-up images of the moon with a night-time landscape. This will enable you to play with perspective and create hyperreal supermoons that enhance their importance in the frame. In Photoshop, simply copy the moon image and paste it onto your landscape before changing the moon's Blending Mode from Normal to Lighten. Experiment with the scale of the moon in your scene using the Free Transform option.



Boost your lands

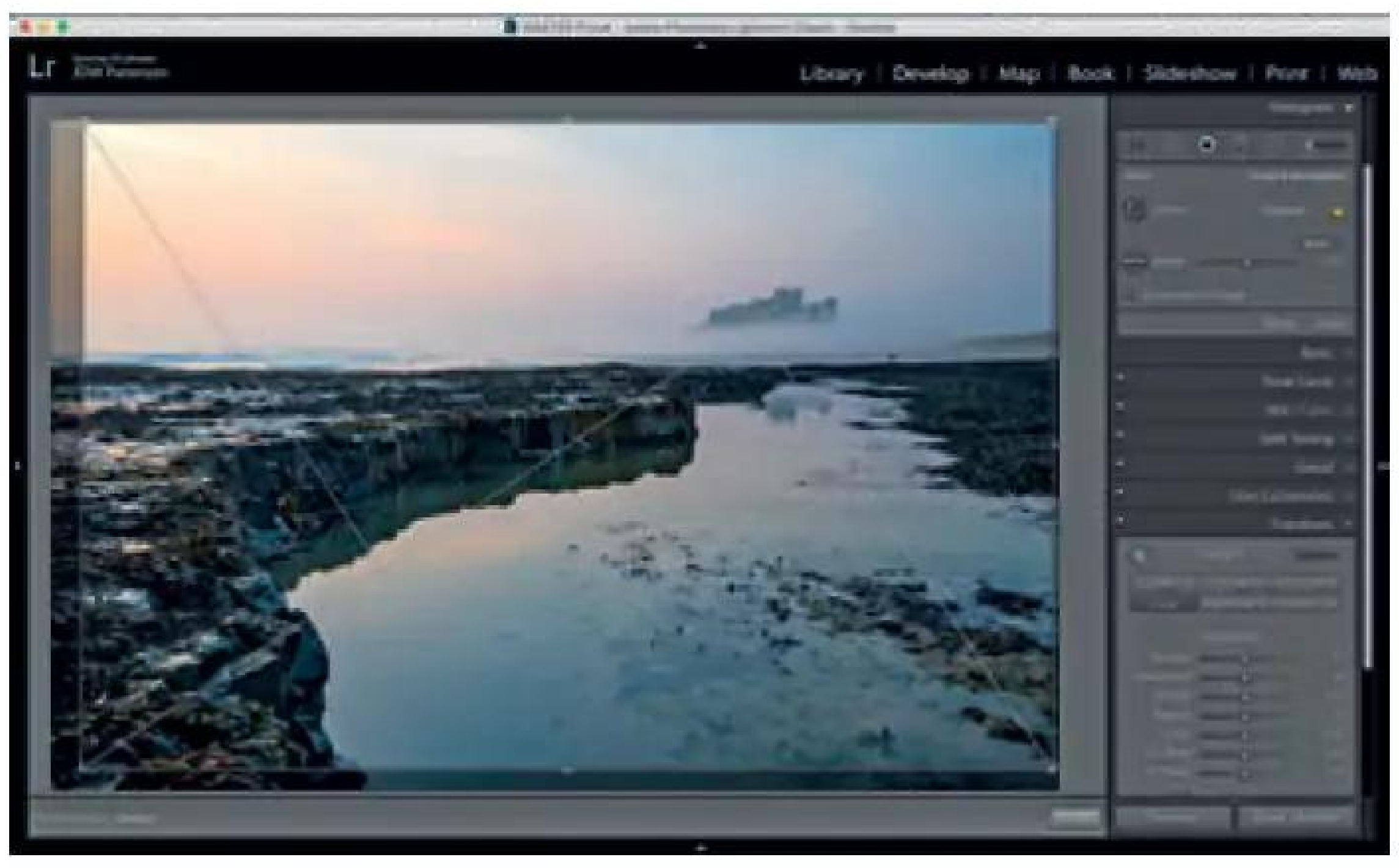
From Lightroom to Luminar, **James Paterson** explores some of the finest options for processing and enhancing your raw photos

SIX ESSENTIAL RAW LANDSCAPE EDITS IN LIGHTROOM



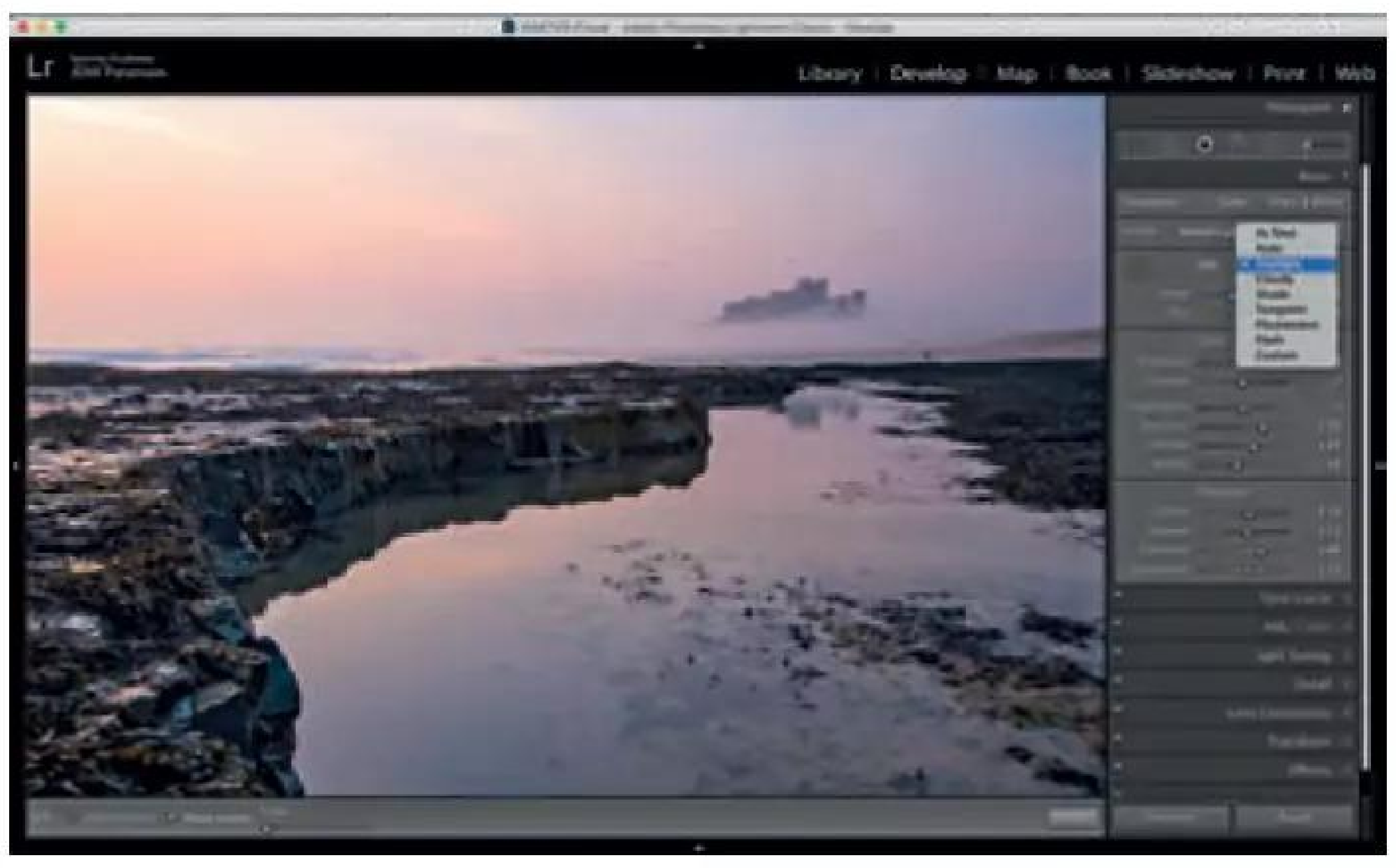
Enhancing tones

Raw files can often initially look flat, but that's because you're expected to make your own enhancements. So to begin, try increasing contrast, tweak shadows and highlights, boost saturation and experiment with Clarity and Dehaze. Here, opening up the shadows reveals greater detail in the rocks.



Crop and level

If, like the image here, the horizon is slightly wonky then Lightroom can automatically fix it with the Level button within the Transform Panel. You might also want to crop the image slightly. Lightroom offers various helpful crop overlays that adhere to different compositional rules. Hit O to cycle between them.



White balance

With raws, you can set the white balance either by choosing a preset, like sunny, cloudy or tungsten, from the preset dropdown here, or grab the white balance eyedropper tool from the toolbar. With this, you can click on a neutral point in the image, like a grey rock or white wall, to remove any colour casts.

capes

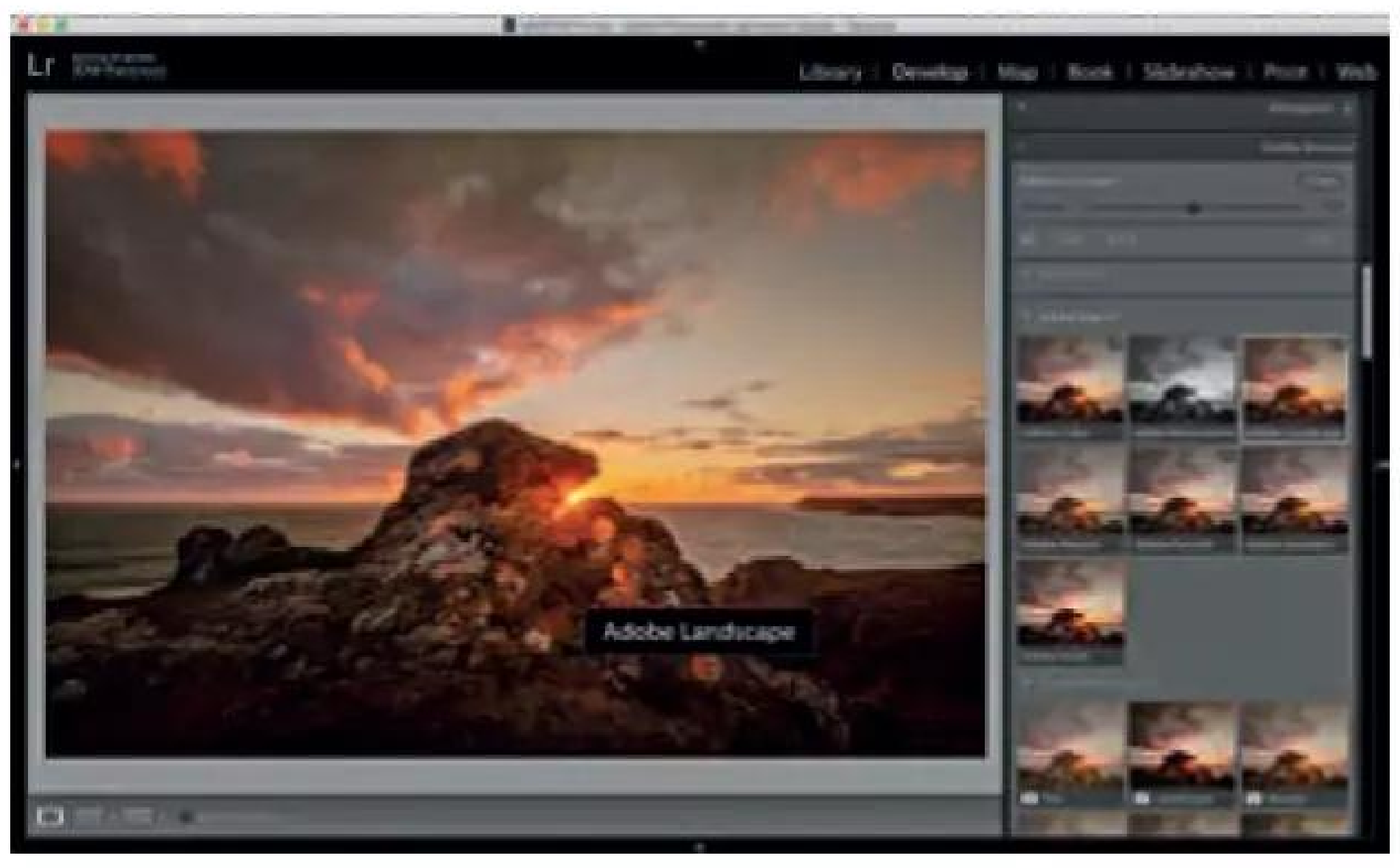
Raw files look very flat straight out of the camera, so to get results like this you need to boost tone and contrast

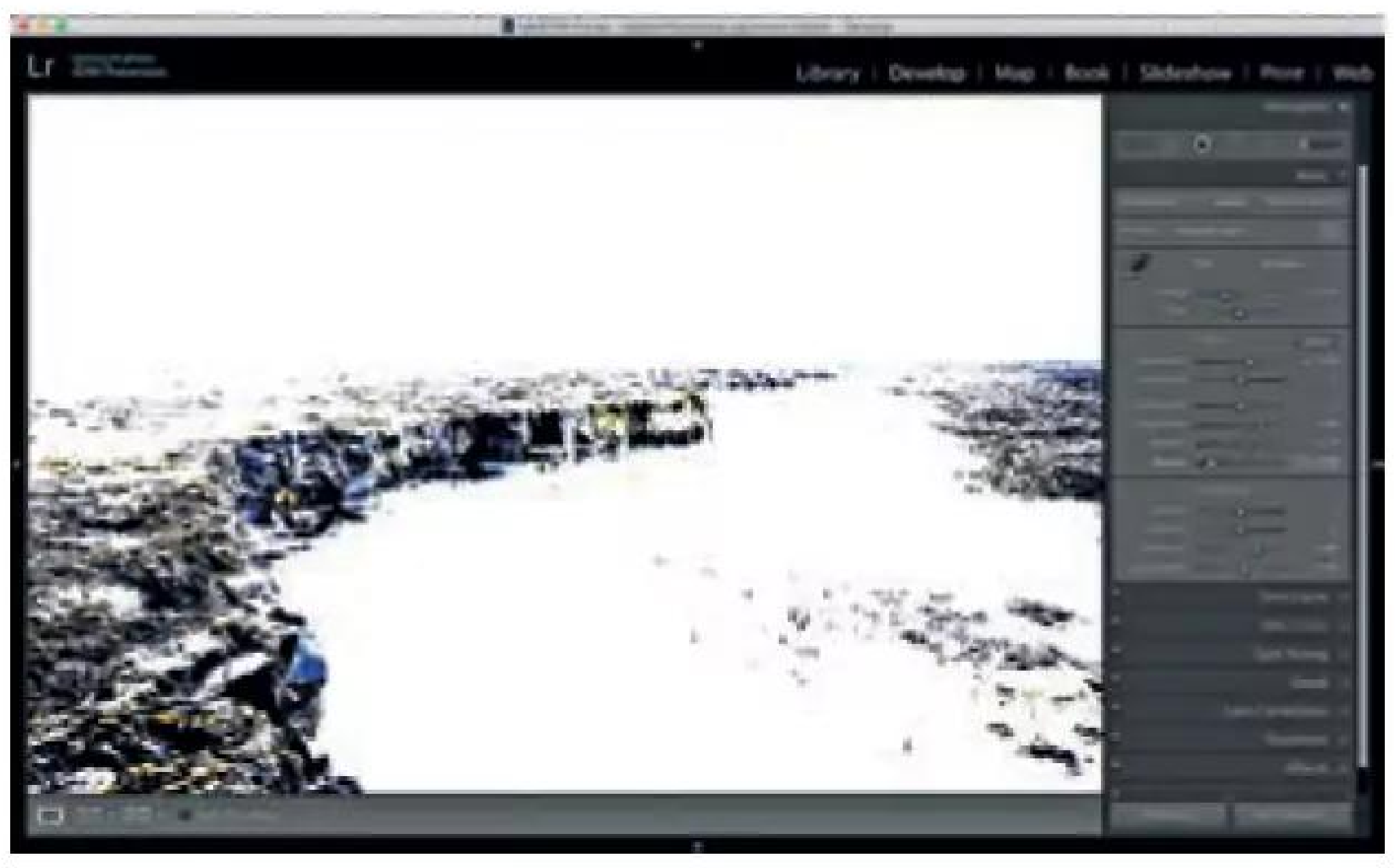
ALL PICTURES © JAMES PATERSON

James Paterson

James is as skilled a photo editor as he is a photographer. His work has appeared in countless magazines and books, and in 2014 he was appointed editor of *Practical Photoshop* magazine. His subjects range from portraits to landscapes, architecture and underwater scenes. For James, Photoshop is more than just a work tool. Visit **www.patersonphotos.com**

It's no coincidence that the best landscape photographs are often the most hard-won. It's tough work getting out and about at ungodly hours for sunrise and sunset; then there's the carting of heavy gear up and down hills, the patience needed to wait for the best light, and the endless creative challenge of crafting that perfect shot. Yet the work doesn't stop once the shutter is pressed. Here, we'll explore some of the best options and techniques for processing your landscape images to perfection. We'll begin by looking at Adobe raw-processing software, then over the page we'll explore other excellent options like Luminar 3 and DXO PhotoLab 2. After all, if you've gone through all that effort to get the shot, then it's only right that your landscapes receive the finish they deserve.



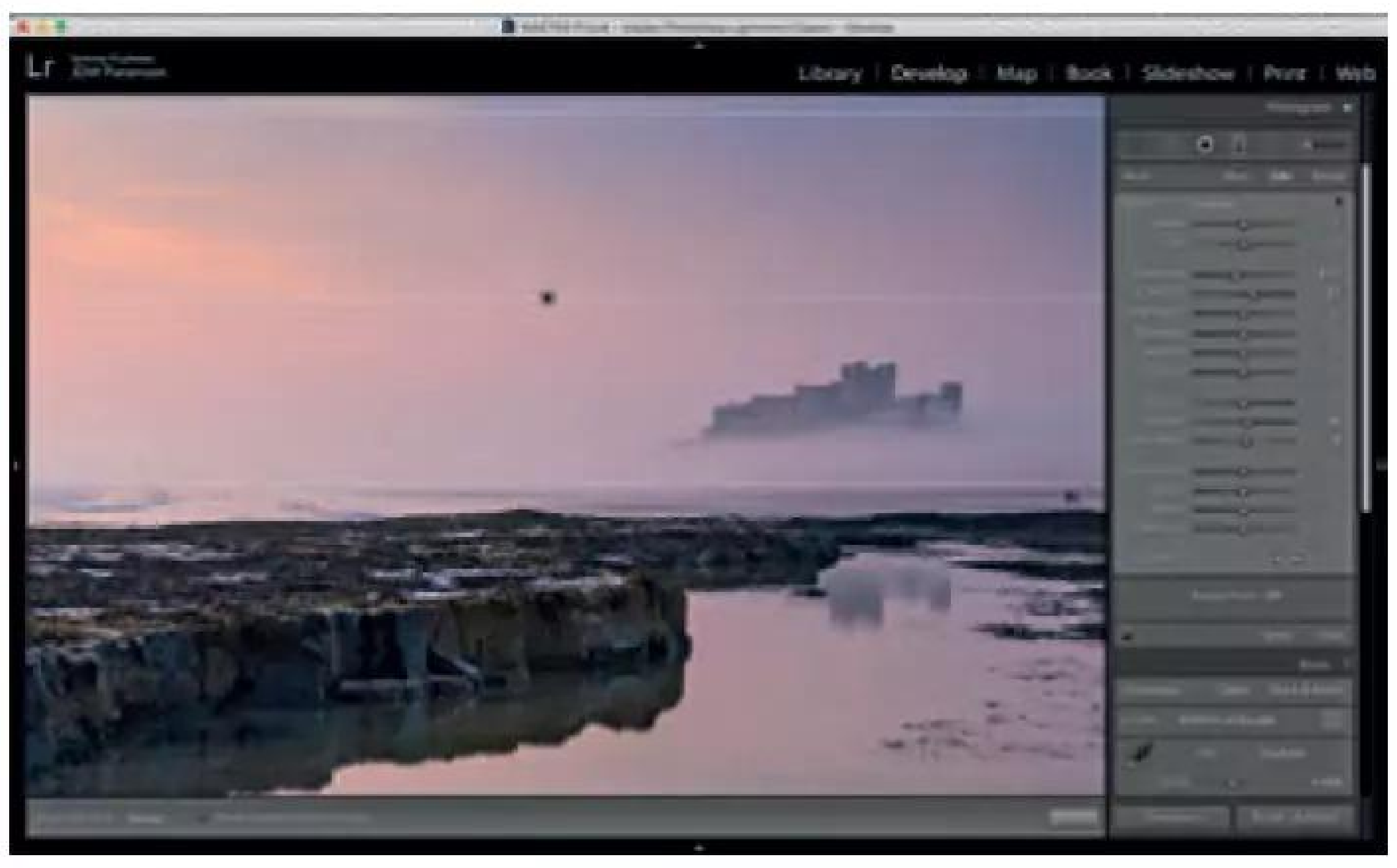


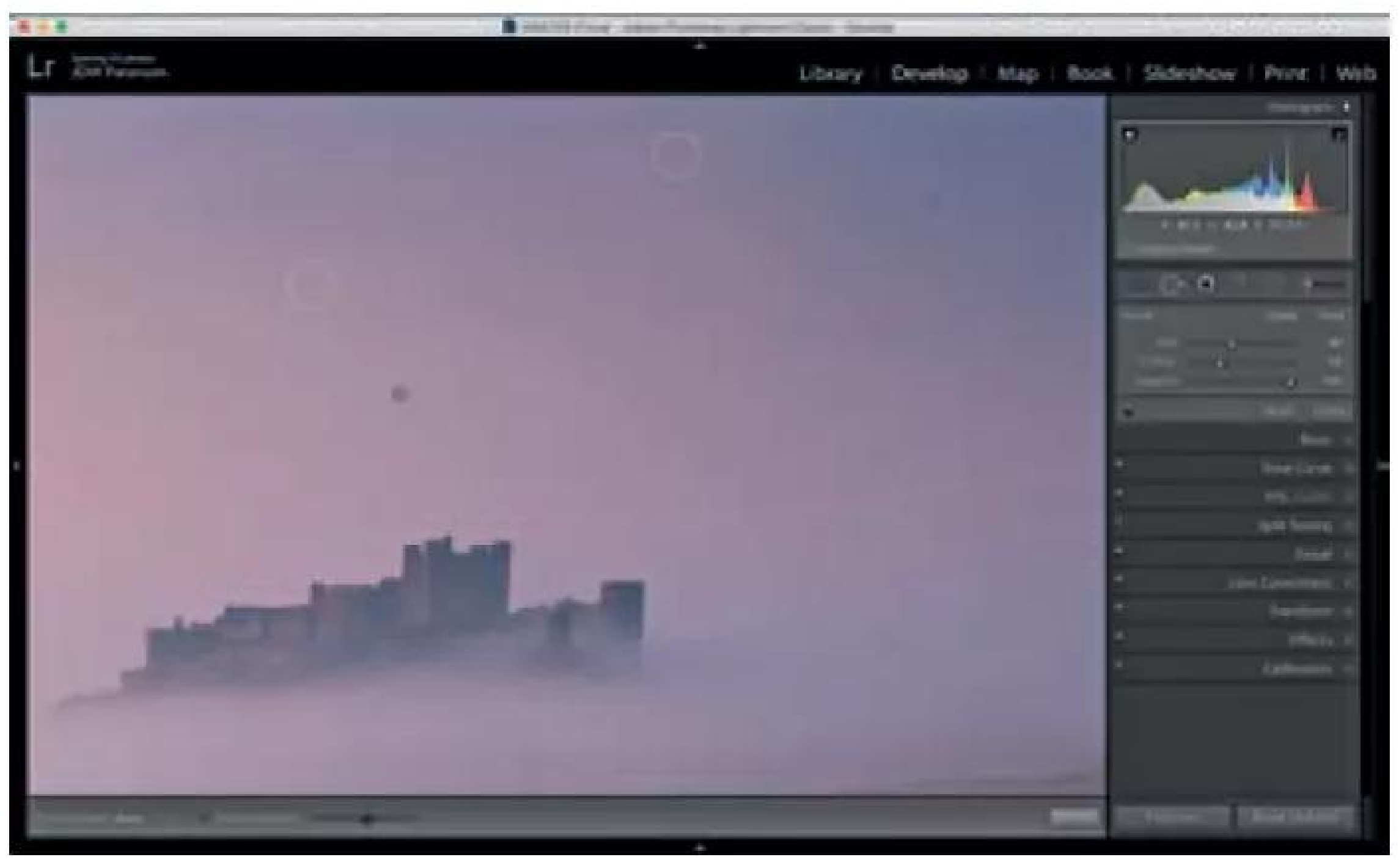
Where to begin

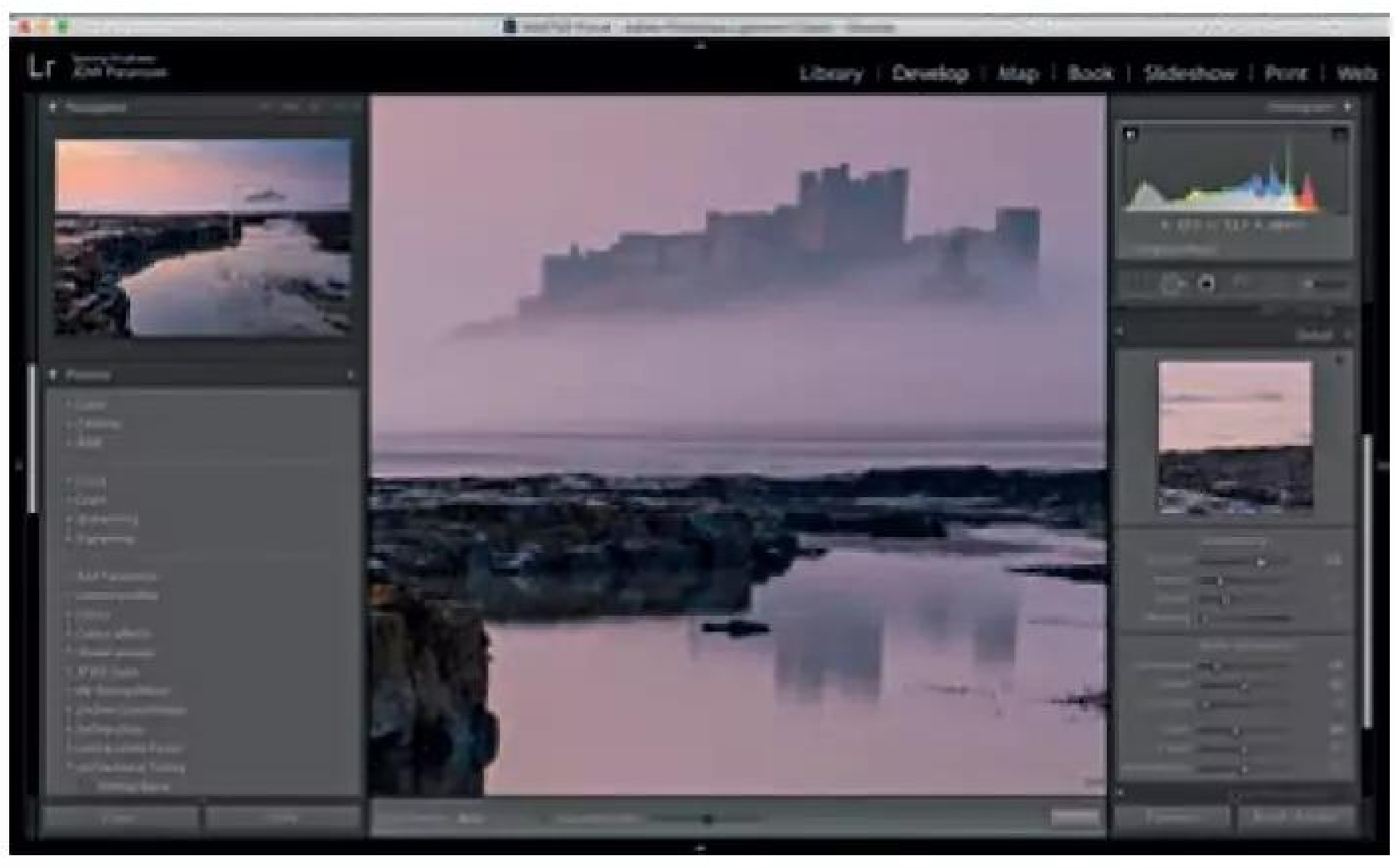
One of the best places to begin editing your landscapes is in Lightroom's Develop Module (or Photoshop's near-identical Adobe Camera Raw plugin). After importing the image into Lightroom, the first port of call will often be the Profile Browser within the Basic Panel. Profiles are starting points for different photos. We can choose the Adobe Landscape Profile here (as long as our image is raw) which enhances the blues in skies and reveals detail in textured surfaces. As such, it offers an immediate yet subtle boost. From here, you can go on to apply further, more tailored edits.

Maximise tonal range

All raw editors enable you to set a white and black point. This is vital as it lets you check for clipped pixels. Areas that are pure white or pure black look out of place. If you see clipped pixels, try to recover them if possible. We also want to boost contrast and make maximum use of the tonal range from pure black to pure white. By setting the black and the white points we can ensure we have this. In Lightroom, hold Alt and drag the Whites and Blacks sliders for a greyscale view to check for clipping. You want to push the sliders to a point just before clipping occurs.







Graduated Filter

The Graduated Filter works wonders over skies by allowing you to darken the tones, enhance contrast and boost colour. Simply grab the tool from the toolbar, drag down from sky to land (hold Shift while dragging for a horizontal line), then adjust the tonal sliders to the right to alter the area covered by the grad.

Remove distractions

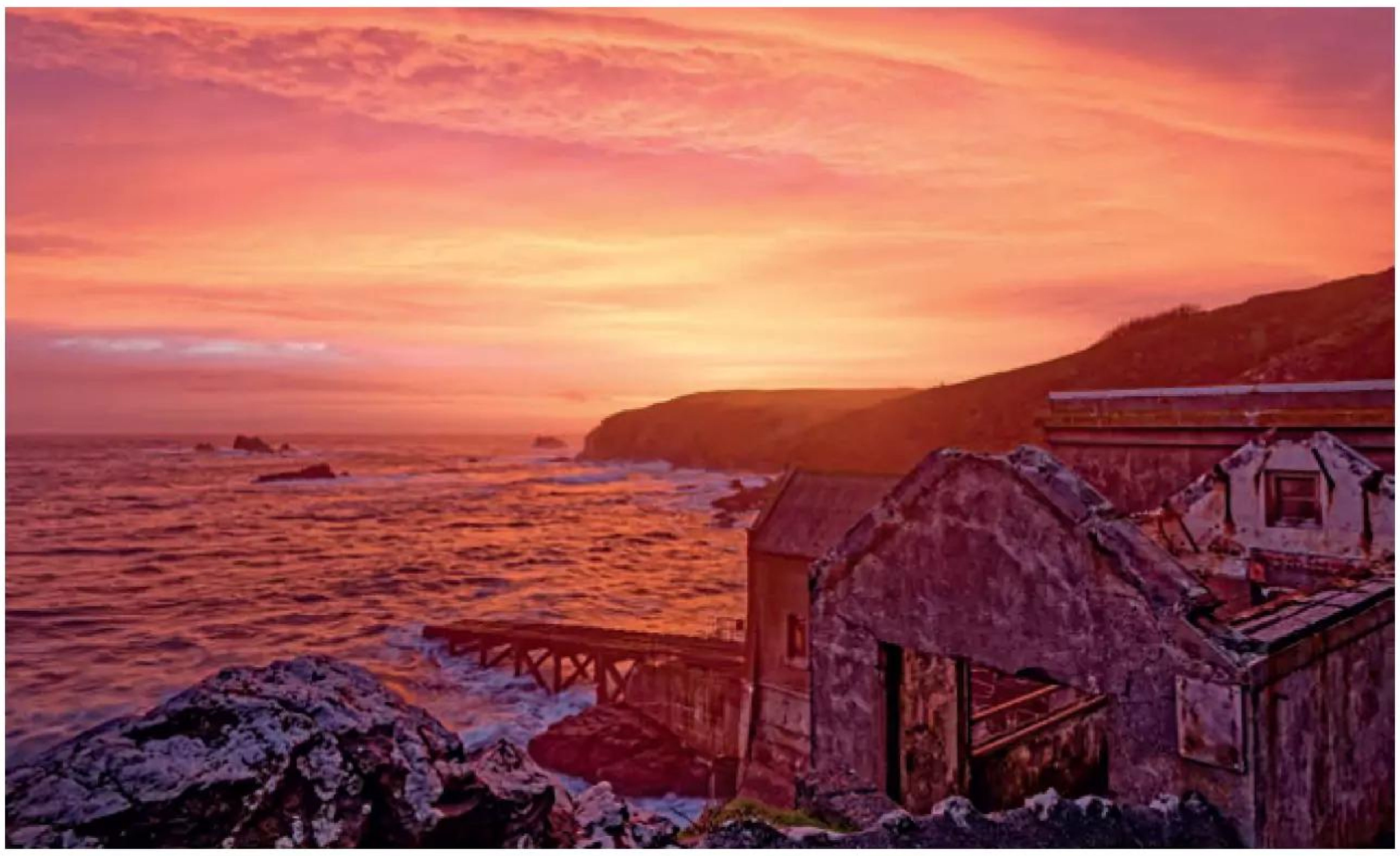
The narrow apertures we generally use for landscapes and the large expanses of sky included in the frame both mean that we're more likely to spot annoying sensor marks in the image. If so, you can use Lightroom's Spot Removal tool to get rid of them, and any other small distractions around the frame.

Sharpening

The Detail Panel in Lightroom is a powerful tool for sharpening your landscapes, which is a crucial step if you want crisp details. The Amount and Radius sliders are the two key settings. With landscapes we typically want a fairly high Amount – around 100-150 – and a low Radius – around 0.8-1.2.

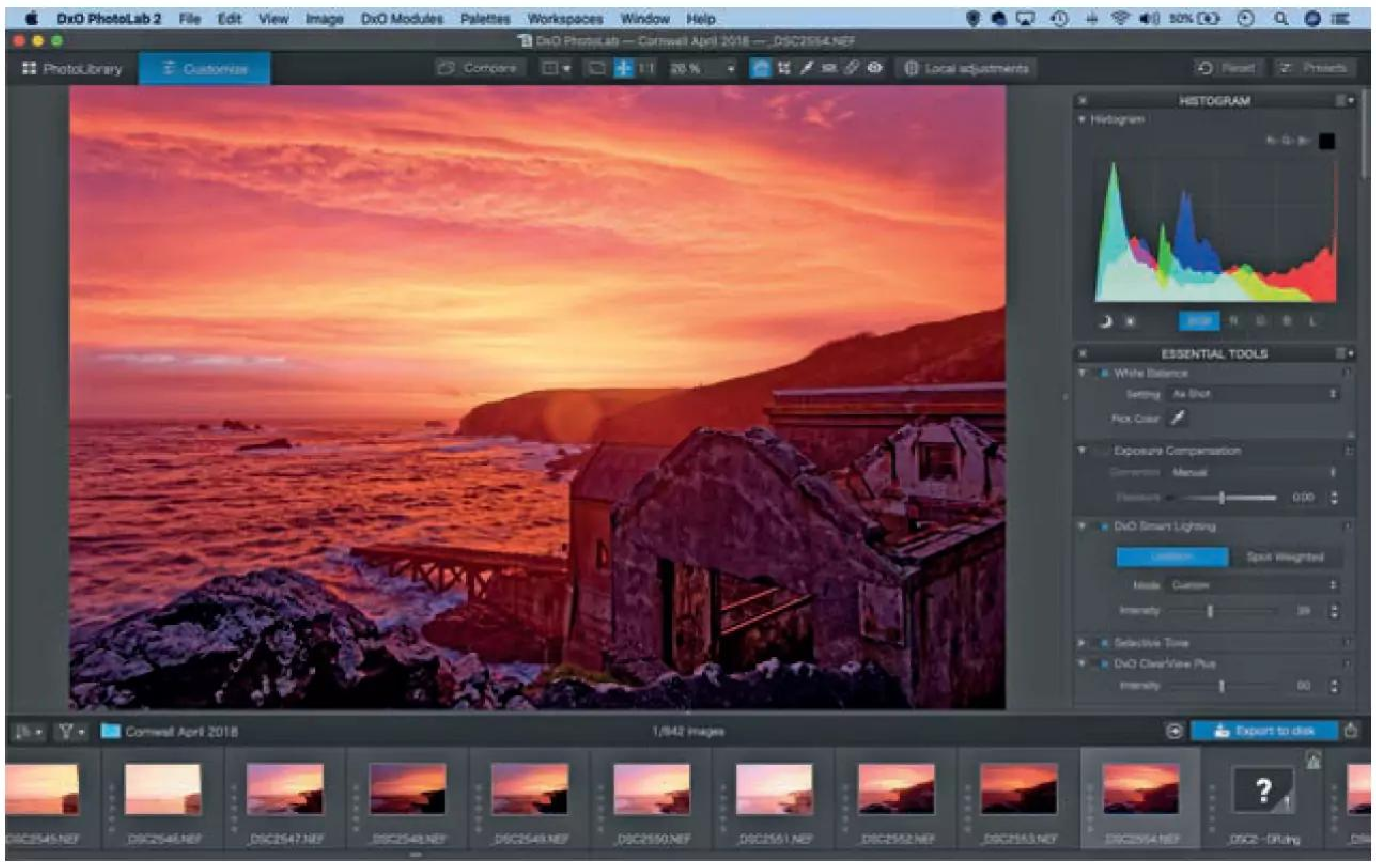
The benefits of raw

All the editing software we've looked at here is designed to be used with raw files. You can use JPEGs if you like, but with raw the benefits are greater. First and foremost, raws have a wider dynamic range than JPEGs, which means they hold more detail in the highlights and shadows. For landscapes, this extra detail can make all the difference. We can pull detail out of blown-out skies and recover lost detail in deep shadows. What's more, raws are 12-bit or 14-bit as opposed to JPEGs, which are 8-bit. This translates to an awful lot more colour information, which means that not only are we able to change the colour space of the image, but we can also alter the white balance after the shot has been taken, with exactly the same results as if we'd done so beforehand.



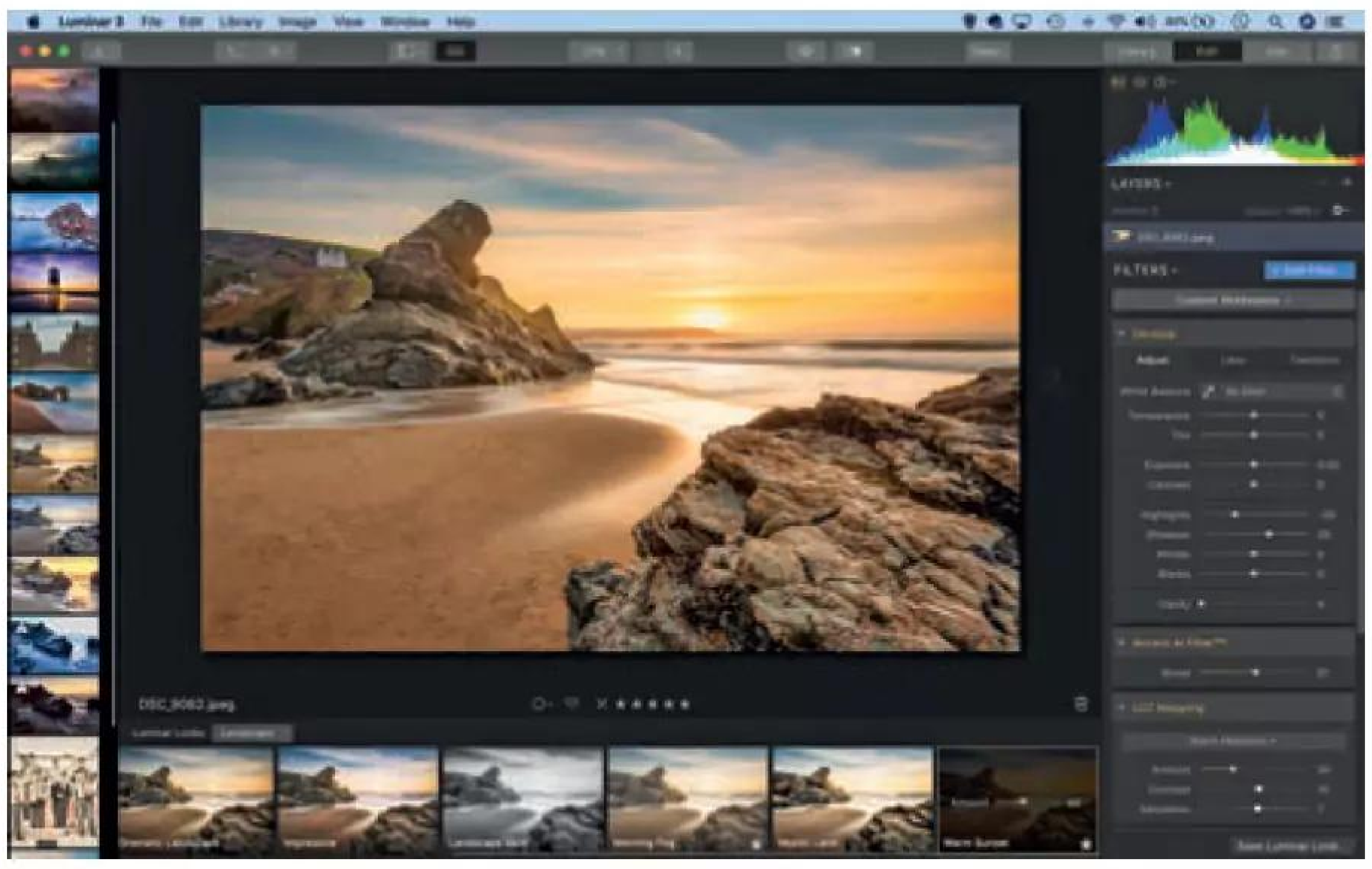
DXO PhotoLab 2

There's a reason why lots of landscape photographers love DxO software: it's because of the way it handles raw files. The latest software from DxO, called PhotoLab 2, performs several enhancements automatically before you even begin editing. DxO uses its extensive database of lens corrections and camera sensors to apply automatic fixes for common problems like chromatic aberration, distortion and vignetting, as well as reducing noise and image softness. You notice this immediately upon opening the raw file, as the program will often ask you to download specific lens and camera modules related to the image being opened. The result is a raw file optimised for further editing and enhancements, which you can go on to make with PhotoLab's powerful array of tools.

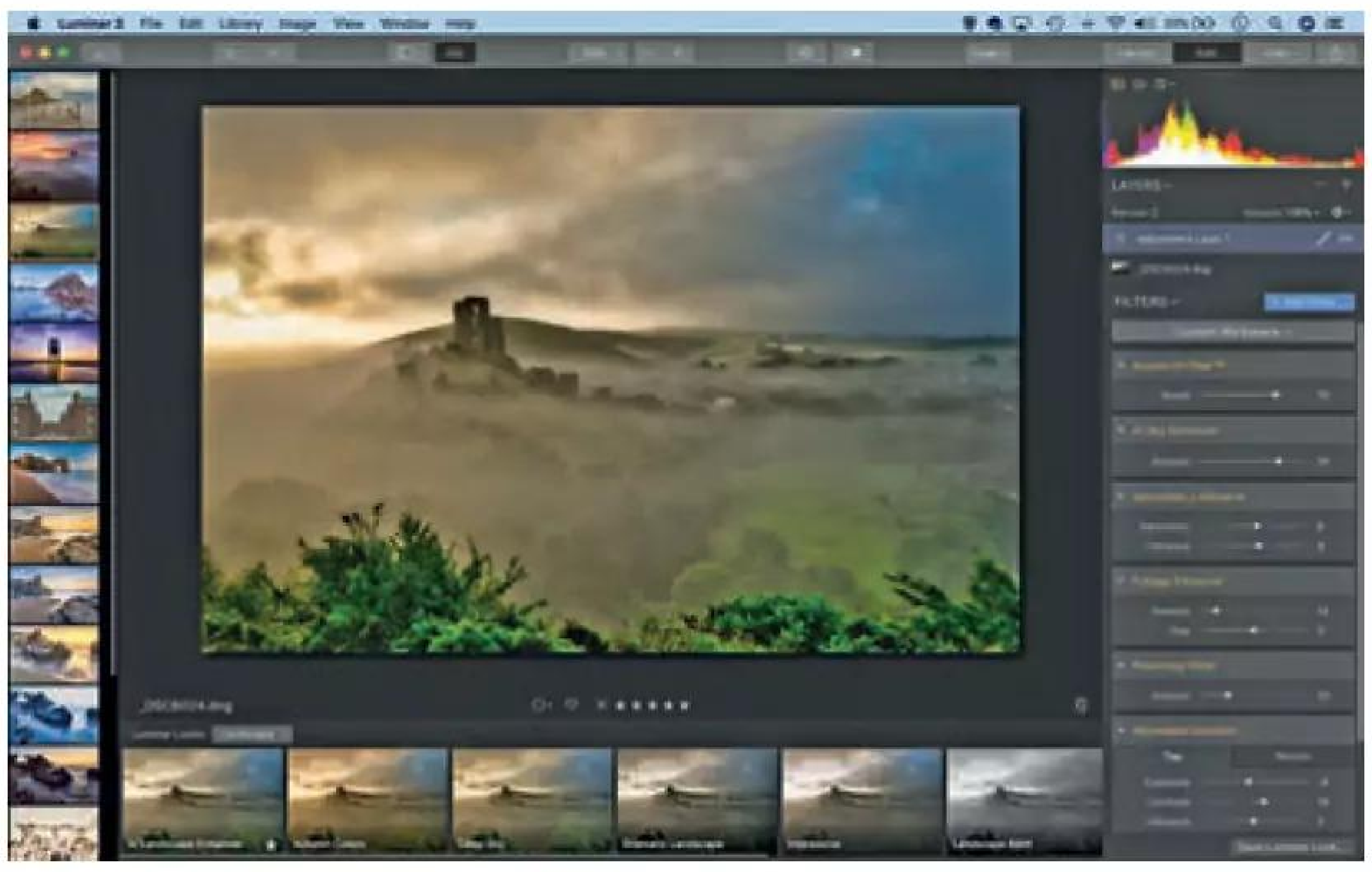

DxO PhotoLab 2 File Edit View Image DxO Modules Palettes Workspaces Window Help
PhotoLibrary
Customize
Compare
Local adjustments
Reset
Presets
HISTOGRAM
ESSENTIAL TOOLS
White Balance
Exposure Compensation
DxO Smart Lighting
Selective Tone
DxO ClearView Plus
Cornwall April 2018
1,842 images
Export to disk

DxO PhotoLab 2 is popular with many photographers thanks to the way it handles raw files

Luminar 3 is geared towards landscape photography

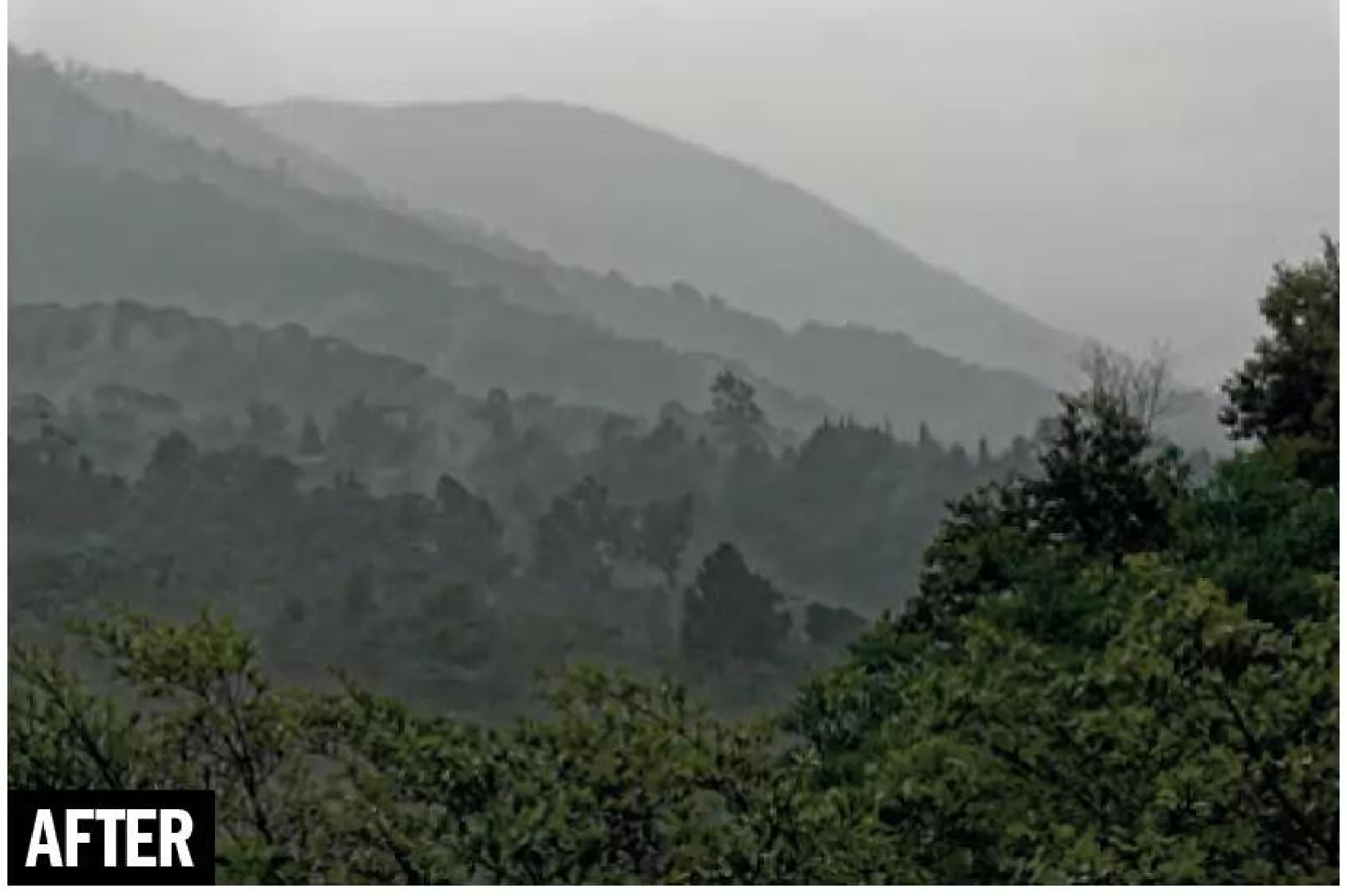


One-click effects in Luminar 3 gives you quick results



Luminar 3 Landscape Looks

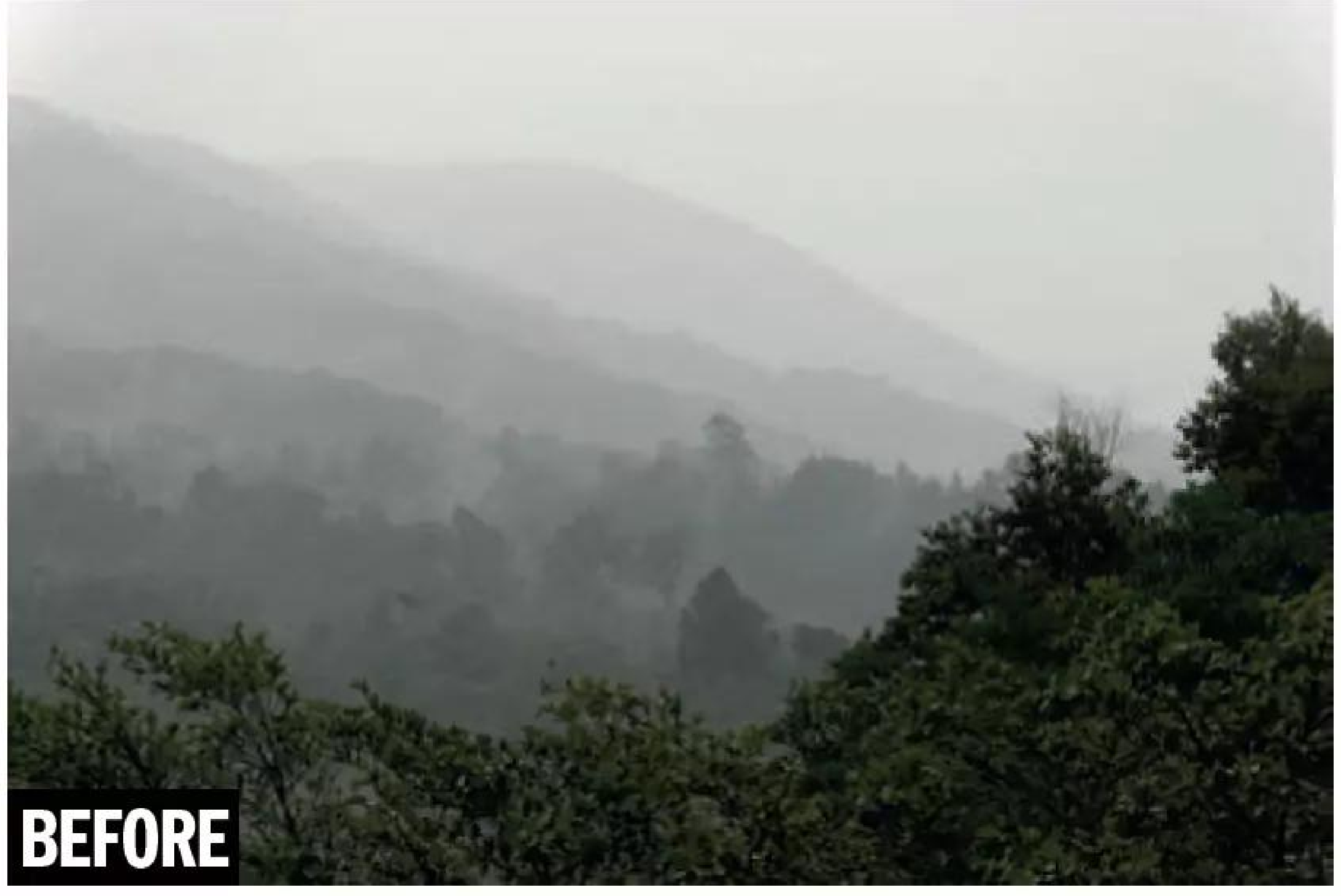
Luminar 3 is a feature-rich editor with several excellent tools. After opening a raw file in the editor, we can choose from a range of different preset 'Luminar Looks'. These are one-click effects for boosting an image, and they include a dedicated landscape set with options like 'Dramatic Landscape', 'Morning Fog' and 'Warm Sunset' (used here). Once you settle upon a preset, you can control its overall effect on the image with a simple slider. For more control, you can delve into the panels on the right to fine-tune all of the different settings that go into making the preset, or start afresh. Here you'll find lots of typical raw controls like Colour Temperature, Exposure and Dehaze, as well as more unique tools like a Foliage Enhancer, Polarizing Filter and Microstructure effect. These effects – and any other combination of filters – can be applied to separate layers, which makes it possible to use them selectively over different areas of your photo.



Reveal hazy detail in the scene using DxO PhotoLab 2

Top PhotoLab 2 features

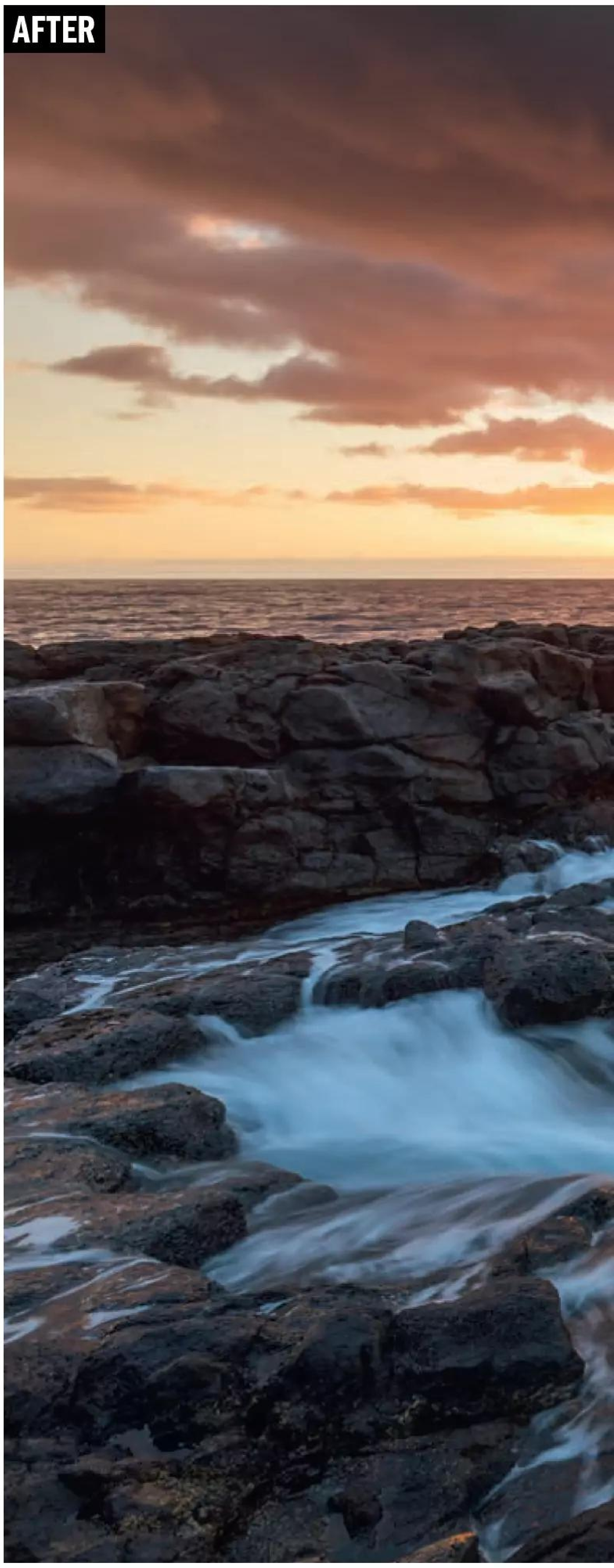
One of the most impressive features in DxO PhotoLab 2 is ClearView Plus. This helpfully analyses the image for haziness and reduces it, resulting in sharper details and greater contrast over parts of an image affected by atmospheric haze or mist. Lots of raw editors have a dehaze feature, but this is definitely one of the best. Another top feature in PhotoLab 2 that will be appreciated by landscape photographers is the Prime Noise Reduction command. This applies an extra level of noise reduction on exporting the photo. It typically takes a few minutes to complete, but it's worth it for the fine degree of noise reduction you'll see in your photos. DxO says that in terms of ISO and noise, it will typically give you the equivalent of an extra stop of light, meaning for example, you can shoot at ISO 400 and get the same results as you'd expect at ISO 200.



AI Landscape Enhancer

Within the range of Luminar Looks is an intriguing option called the AI Landscape Enhancer. This employs a combination of two forms of artificial intelligence (AI). First, the 'Accent AI Filter' analyses your image, detecting the content and boosting detail. Second, the 'AI Sky Enhancer' automatically detects and enhances the sky. Both these effects have sliders that can be fine-tuned (and both can be applied individually within the filter menu to combine them with other effects). These landscape-specific features are among some of the best in Luminar 3, and they're appealing if you prefer not to spend too much time editing your photos.

Corfe Castle, Dorset, in mist, edited using AI Landscape Enhancer



Work out like a pro

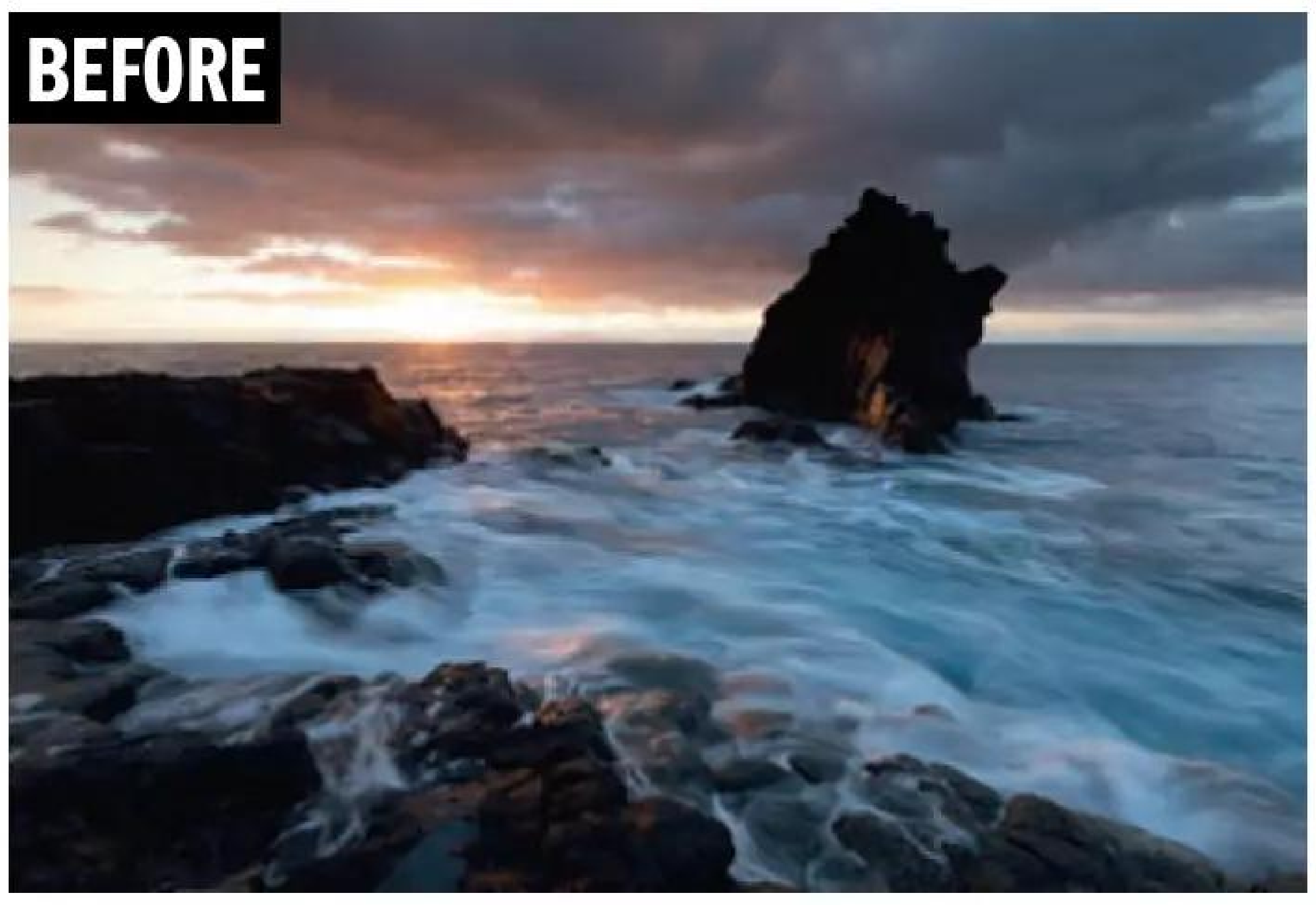
Having an efficient editing process is essential. For professional results, consistency and organisation is key. Landscape pro **Justin Minns** talks us through his Lightroom workflow

For a professional photographer having a consistent workflow is essential. Following a simple series of steps – from capturing the images in camera to delivering the final prints or digital files – helps to keep things organised, improves efficiency, and brings consistency to your work.

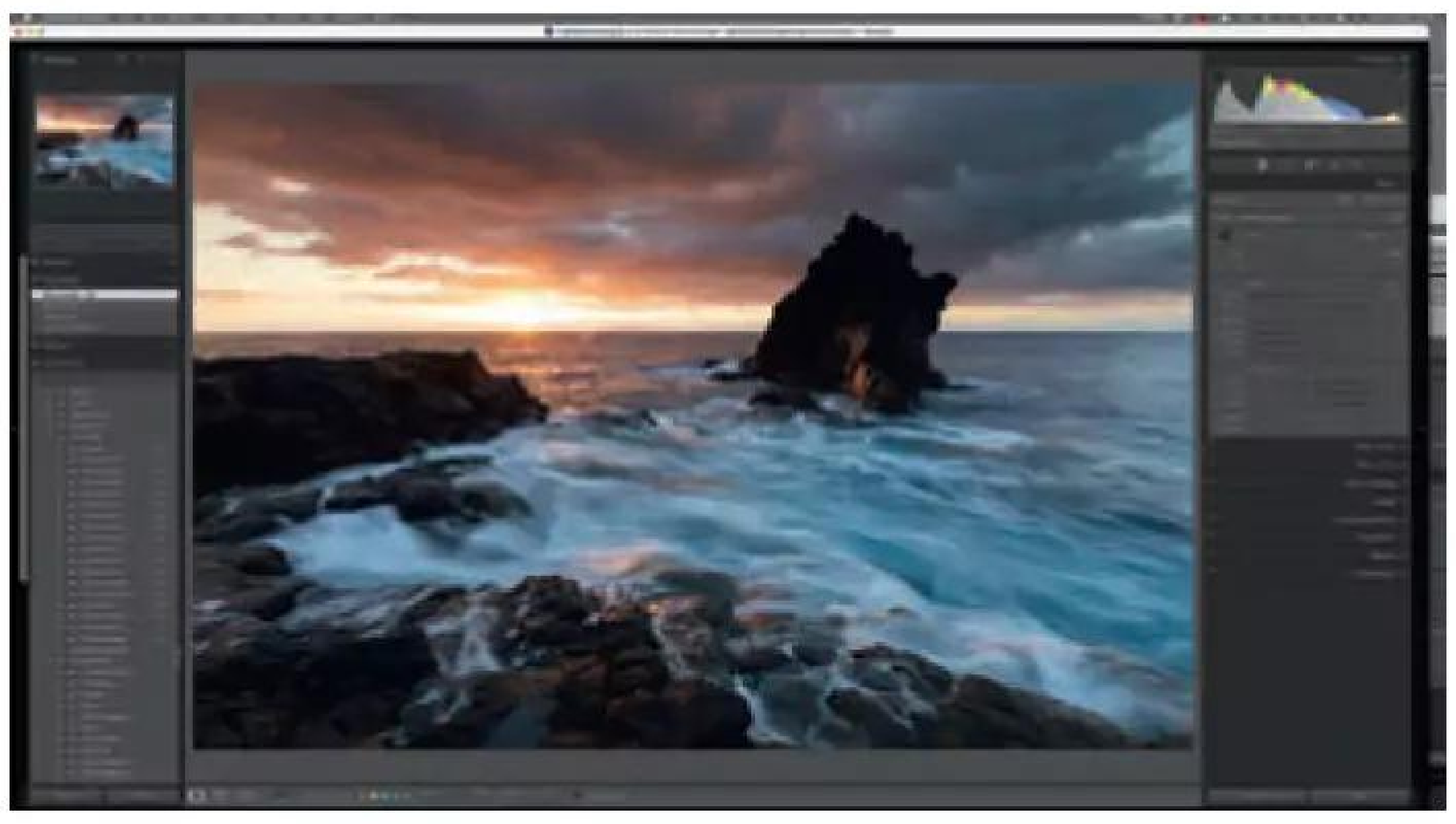
The first stage of a photography workflow starts in the field with the camera but here we are focusing on what happens next, at the computer. Designed specifically as a workflow tool for photographers, Adobe Lightroom has been at the heart of my workflow for many years and for organisation I think it is second to none. When it comes to processing, it obviously cannot compete with Photoshop in terms of the level of creativity possible, but it isn't meant to. They are designed to work hand in hand with each other. While I initially used Lightroom for organisation and Photoshop for the more advanced processing, over the years I have found myself using Lightroom almost exclusively.

Whatever software you use, simplicity is the key to a good workflow. Lightroom uses a simple modular system with separate modules each with different capabilities suited to each stage of the workflow. The golden rule is to always do everything within Lightroom. If you need to rename or move files, do it from Lightroom so it can keep track of where things are.

Following a shoot, my workflow begins in the Library module. Using a

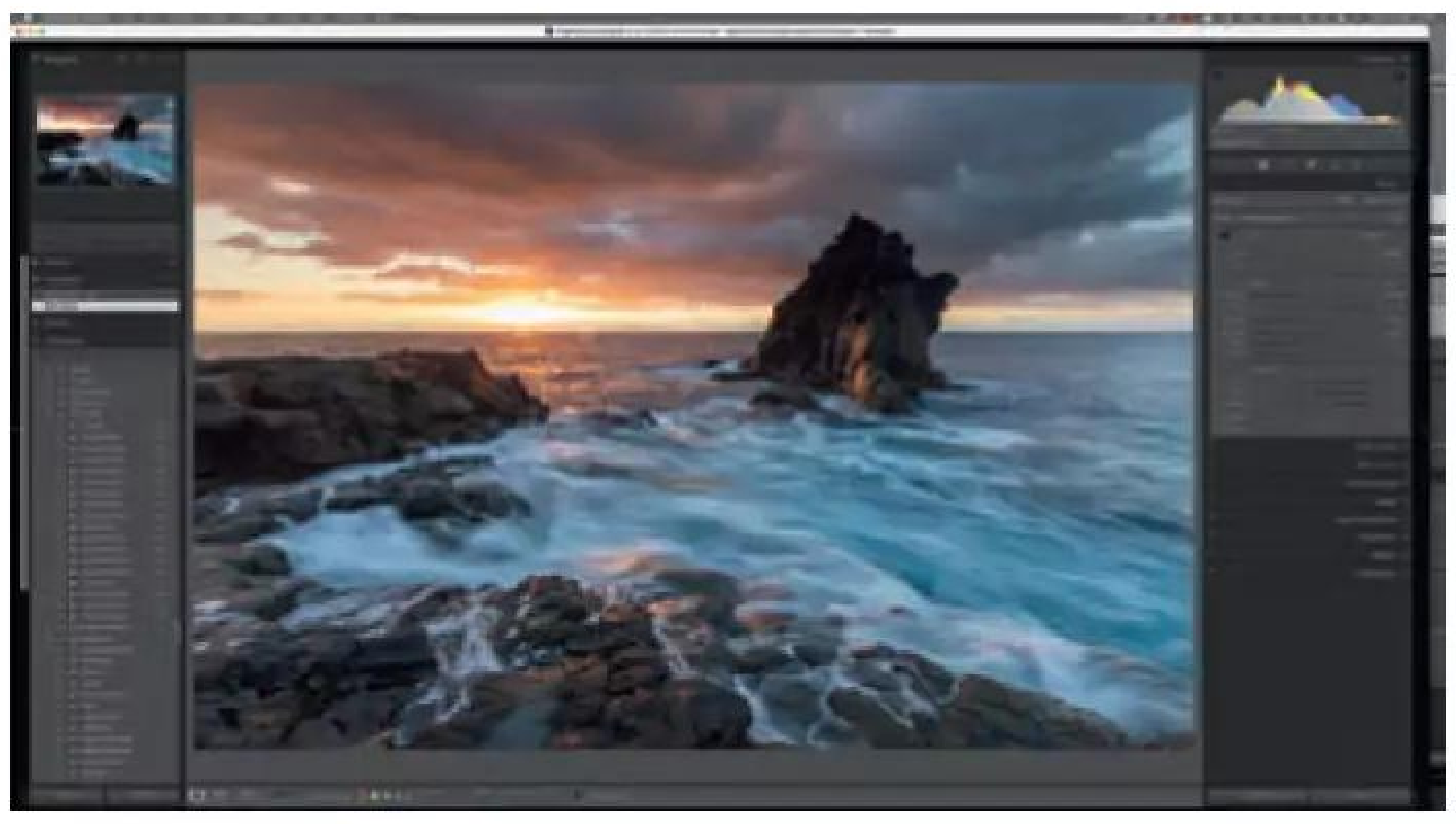


JUSTIN'S PROCESSING STEPS IN ADOBE LIGHTROOM



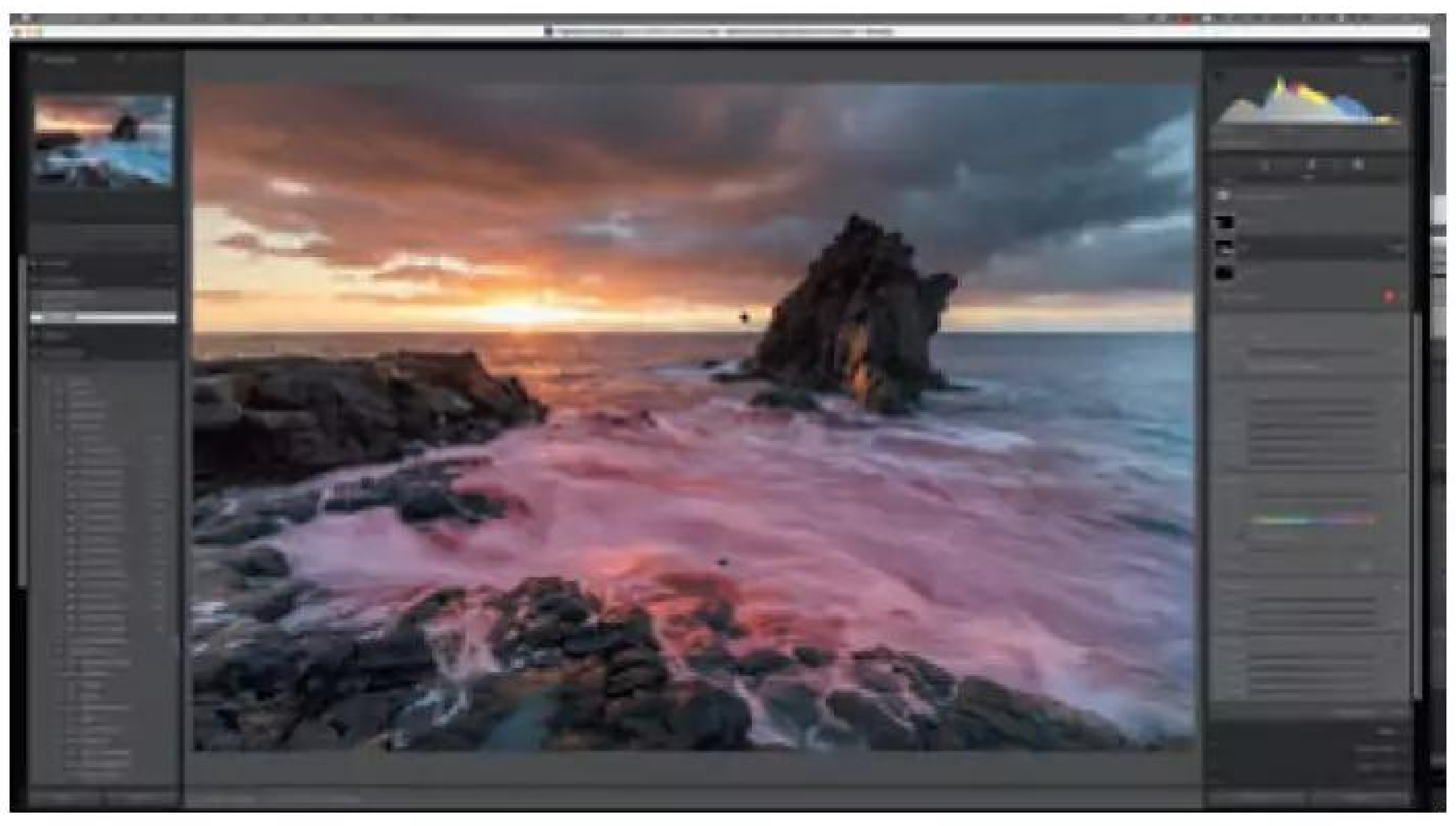
1. Set the Profile

Having assessed the image and automatically applying lens corrections, the first step is to set the profile. Profiles apply adjustments like saturation and contrast to a raw file but without moving any sliders, they just give you a new starting point. There are a number to choose from, I've used Adobe Landscape.



2. Global adjustments

Next comes white balance which I have warmed slightly to bring out more colour in the sky. The photo is dark and contrasty so in the Basic palette I use + 0.15 to lighten the whole image, bring the shadows slider up to +70 and then, to keep detail in the brighter areas, lower the highlights to -50.

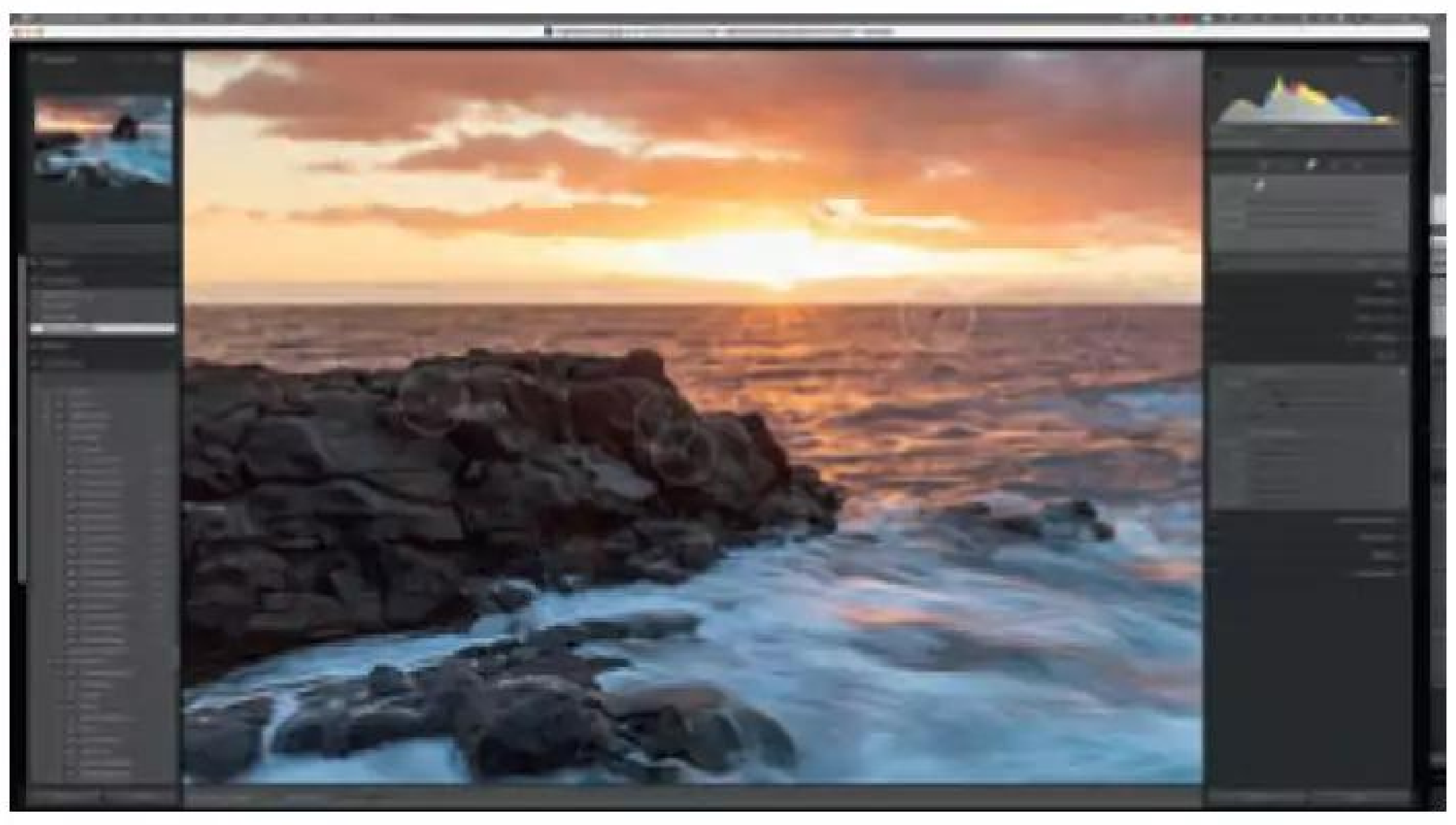


3. Fine-tune with masks

Several areas of the image need further adjustments: the top of the rock stack is still a little dark from the graduated lens filter I used, the rocks could use more contrast and the foreground sea needs brightening and softening to emphasise the movement. Each of these I select and adjust using masks.

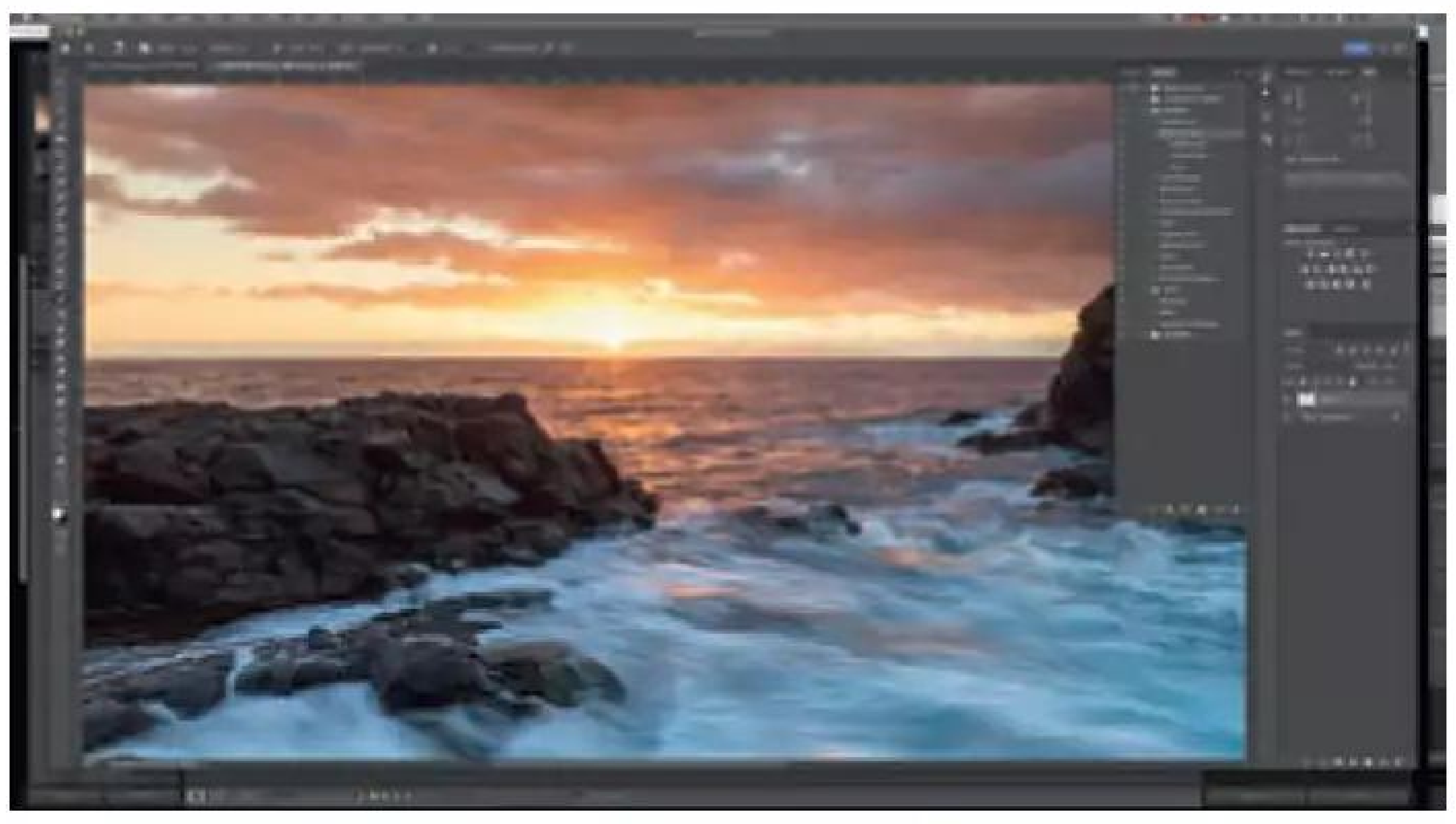
Justin Minns

Justin is a professional landscape photographer best known for his atmospheric images of East Anglia. He runs landscape photography workshops both in East Anglia and around the UK. See more at www.justinminns.co.uk



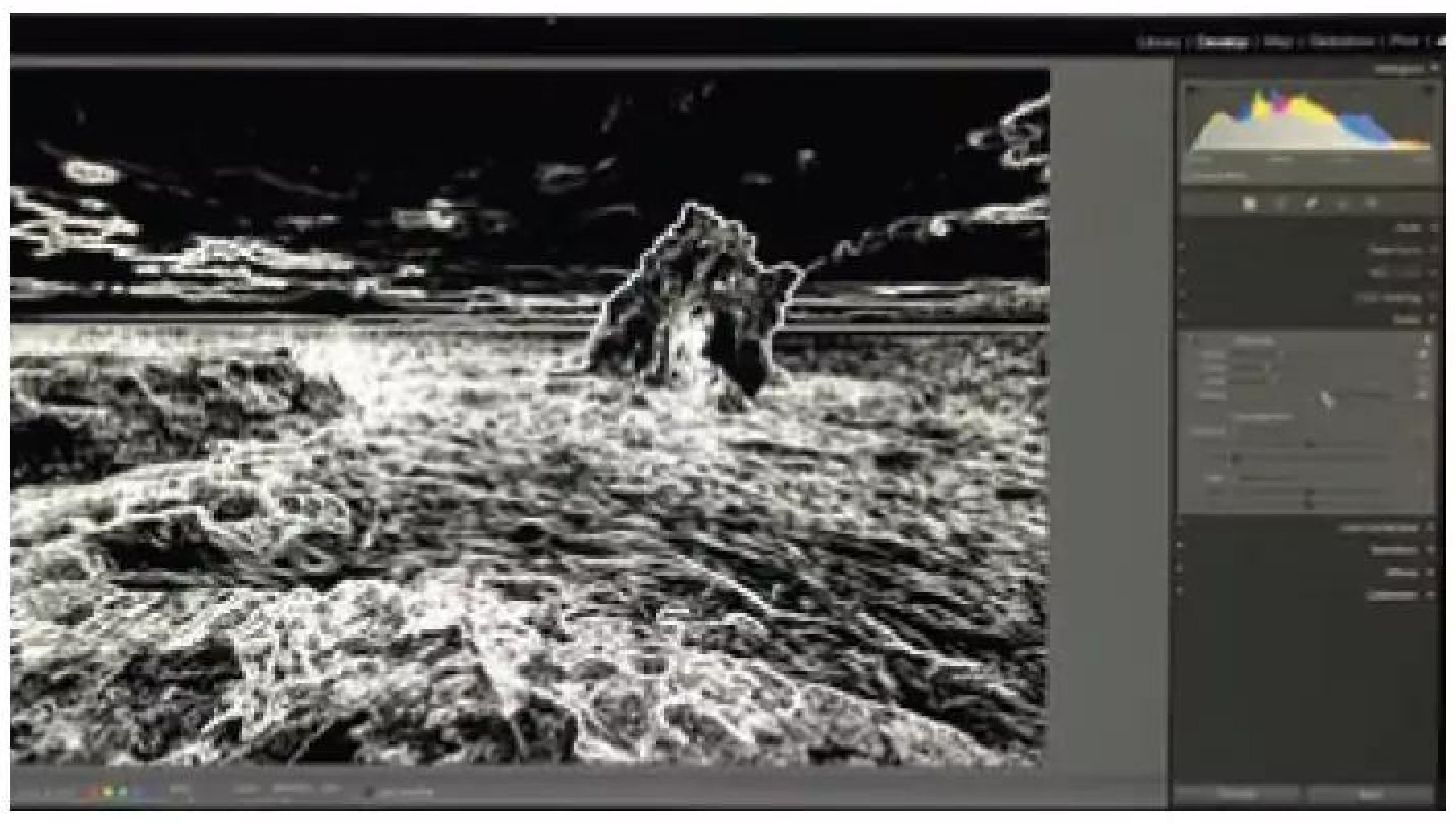
4. Remove lens flare

There are a few spots of lens flare on the rocks. More complex lens flare may require Photoshop but here I could remove the worst bits using Lightroom's content aware healing brush and then toning down what remains by selecting the areas with a brush and desaturating and darkening them slightly.



5. Edit in Photoshop

A small area around the sun is burnt out – it is soft enough to not be noticed too much but it can be remedied in Photoshop. On a new layer with the blending mode set to darken, I sample the warm colour in the sky and using a soft-edged brush set to around 30% opacity I gently paint in the sky colour.



6. Sharpen and crop

Back in Lightroom, I apply the built-in medium sharpen preset. Fine-tune by holding down the alt key and sliding the masking slider until only the edges are visible on the black & white preview. Crop at the end so it remains non-destructive, as cropping prior to editing in Photoshop will lose the cropped pixels.

card reader, I open the import window and select the images to import. All my images are stored on a network drive, with a folder for each year and sub-folders for each shoot. From the import window I can select the appropriate year folder as the destination and create a sub-folder for the shoot, then copy the files to this folder and import them to my Lightroom catalogue simultaneously. Not only does creating a sub-folder this way save an extra step in the process, but Lightroom has several options such as renaming files or applying keywords for customising the import process. I add basic keywords at this stage as well as applying my metadata preset containing all my copyright and contact details and a develop preset automatically applying lens corrections.

Images imported, the next and often longest stage, is selecting the best of those to process. Lightroom has several ways of differentiating between images: coloured labels, star ratings, keywords, flags, etc., and I've developed a system with these. First I flick through the whole shoot, flagging anything I like and rejecting anything that is clearly useless. I then delete all the rejected photos and use Lightroom's filter to show only the flagged ones. I then compare these in Survey mode using a process of elimination to find the best ones. These I mark with a red label, indicating they are to be processed.

Now we move to the Develop module. For me the joy of landscape photography is being out in the elements and witnessing some of nature's wonders whether that be the aurora over a glacier in Iceland or a misty sunrise on the Norfolk Broads. The challenge for me is trying to capture that atmosphere out in the field in my images so I try to keep my processing as simple as possible. I often use Lightroom's masks to select and adjust different parts of the photo as necessary (you can turn the page for a more detailed description of masks and my Develop workflow). Lightroom integrates seamlessly with other software so if a photo needs something not possible in Lightroom, I can select Edit in, choose the appropriate app and it will open it up for me, saving it back to Lightroom when I have finished. I mainly use Photoshop's spot healing brush or cloning tools and occasionally Topaz DeNoise for cleaning up noisy images.

Once processed I will go through the finished images adding more detailed keywords and applying a 5-star rating to all the best ones, which is an essential part of keeping my image library organised. Lightroom has some powerful features for organising (and thus being able to easily find) your images. I use collections and smart collections extensively for organising my images according to place, subject, or usage. Collections are basically galleries to which you can add photos without affecting the neat, chronologically ordered folders on your hard drive.

As I don't print my photos myself, the final stage in my workflow is to export. Lightroom's export window has options for size, quality, file type, re-naming, sharpening, and watermarking (there are even options to open in Photoshop and run an action on export). It is very easy to save these settings as presets and to speed up the process. The finished raw or TIFF files are my master copies from which I can export as many different copies as I like; so there is no need to clog up my hard drive or Lightroom catalogue with thousands of JPEG copies and once these have served their purpose they are deleted.

Getting the best from Lightroom

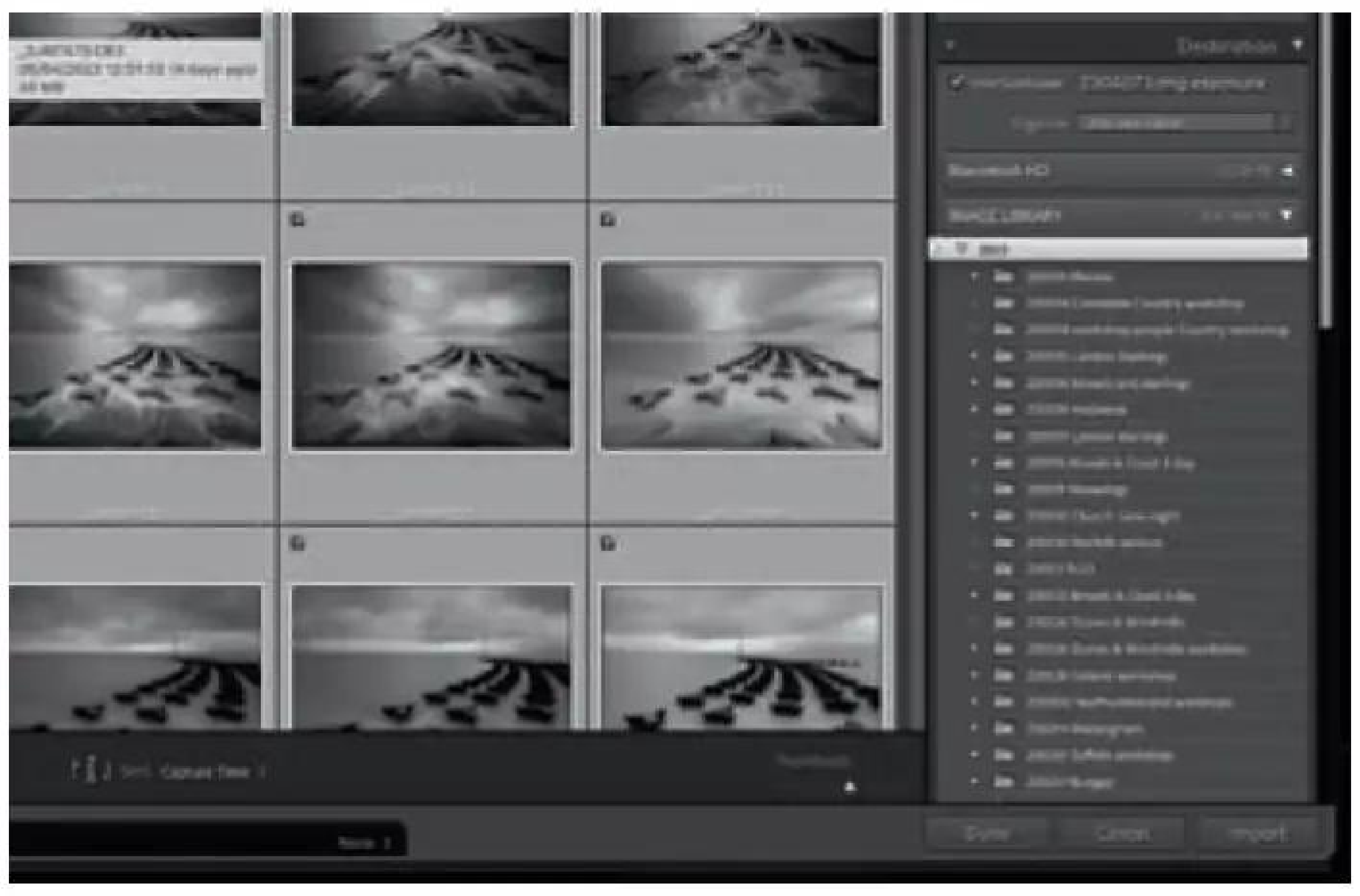
Apply During Import

This little box in the import window saves bags of time. You can automatically apply keywords, any of your Develop presets (I use a preset to apply lens corrections) as well as creating and applying your own metadata preset to embed your contact information.

Smart collections

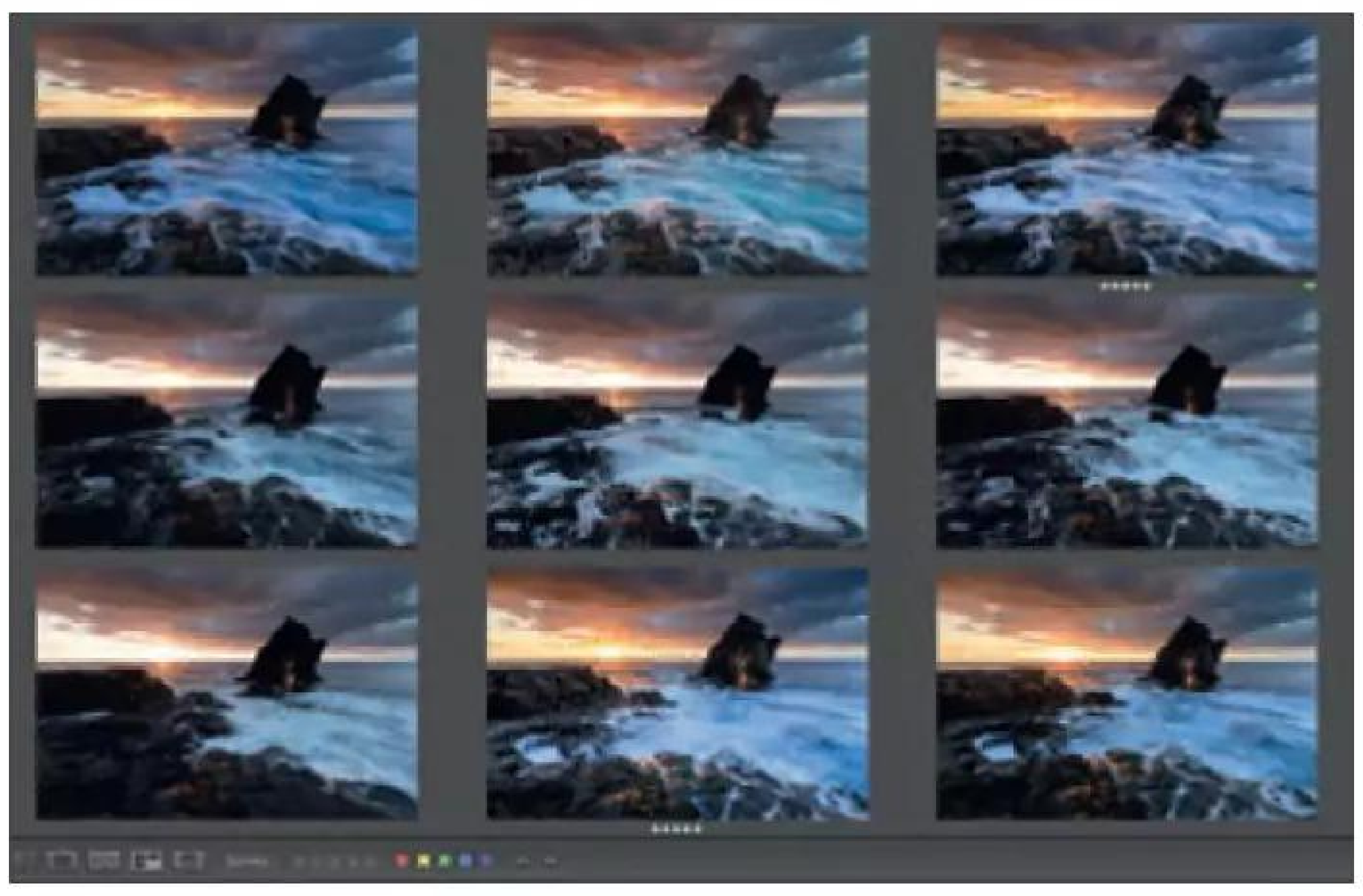
Smart collections automatically collect images from your catalogue based on the criteria you set. You can choose from star ratings, coloured labels, keywords, metadata etc. For example, I have a smart collection for

JUSTIN'S WORKFLOW STEPS



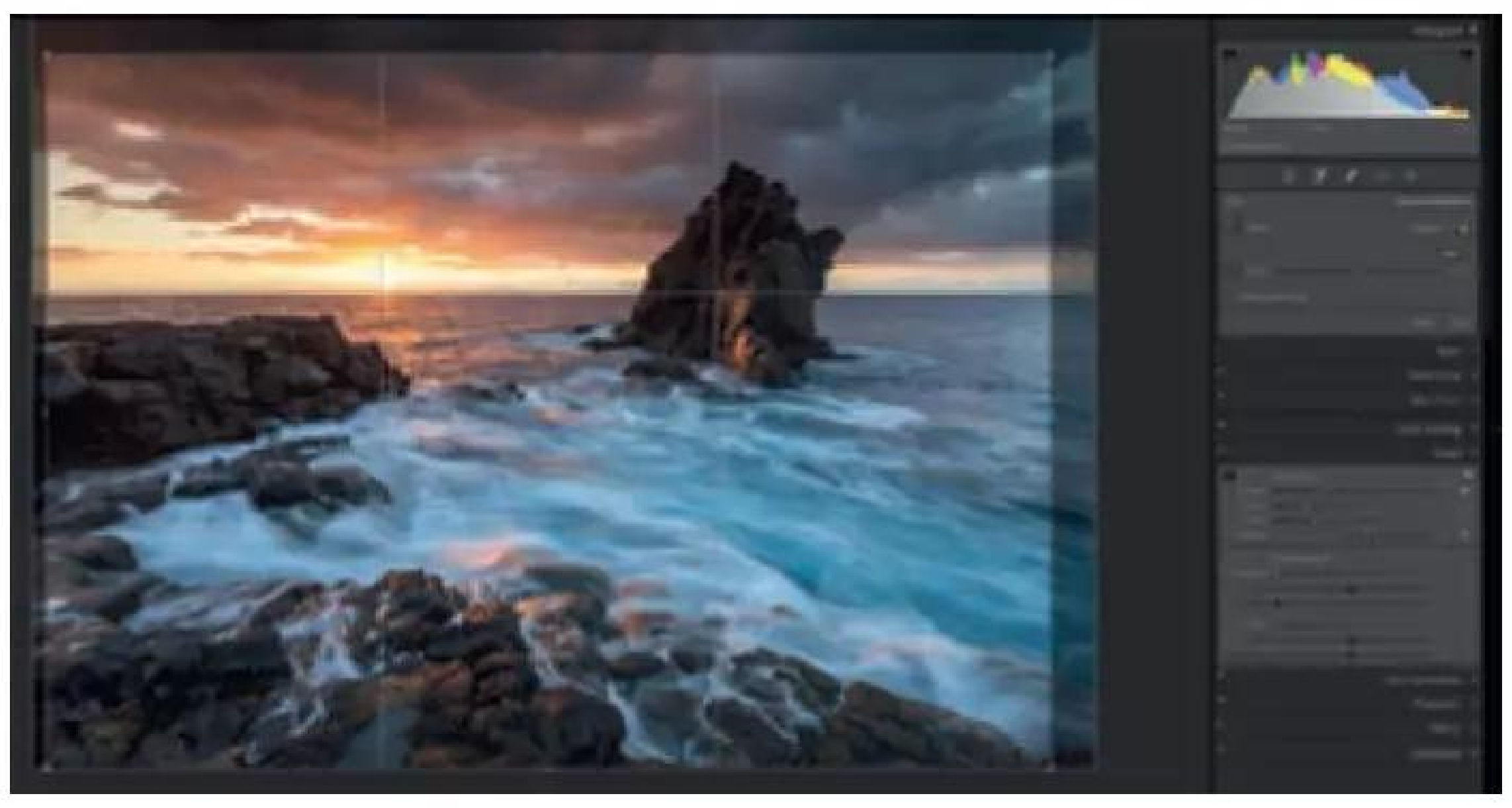
1. Import

The workflow begins with adding your images to the Lightroom catalogue. The quickest way is to use the import window to copy images straight from the memory card to a folder on your hard drive while simultaneously adding them to your Lightroom catalogue.



2. Edit

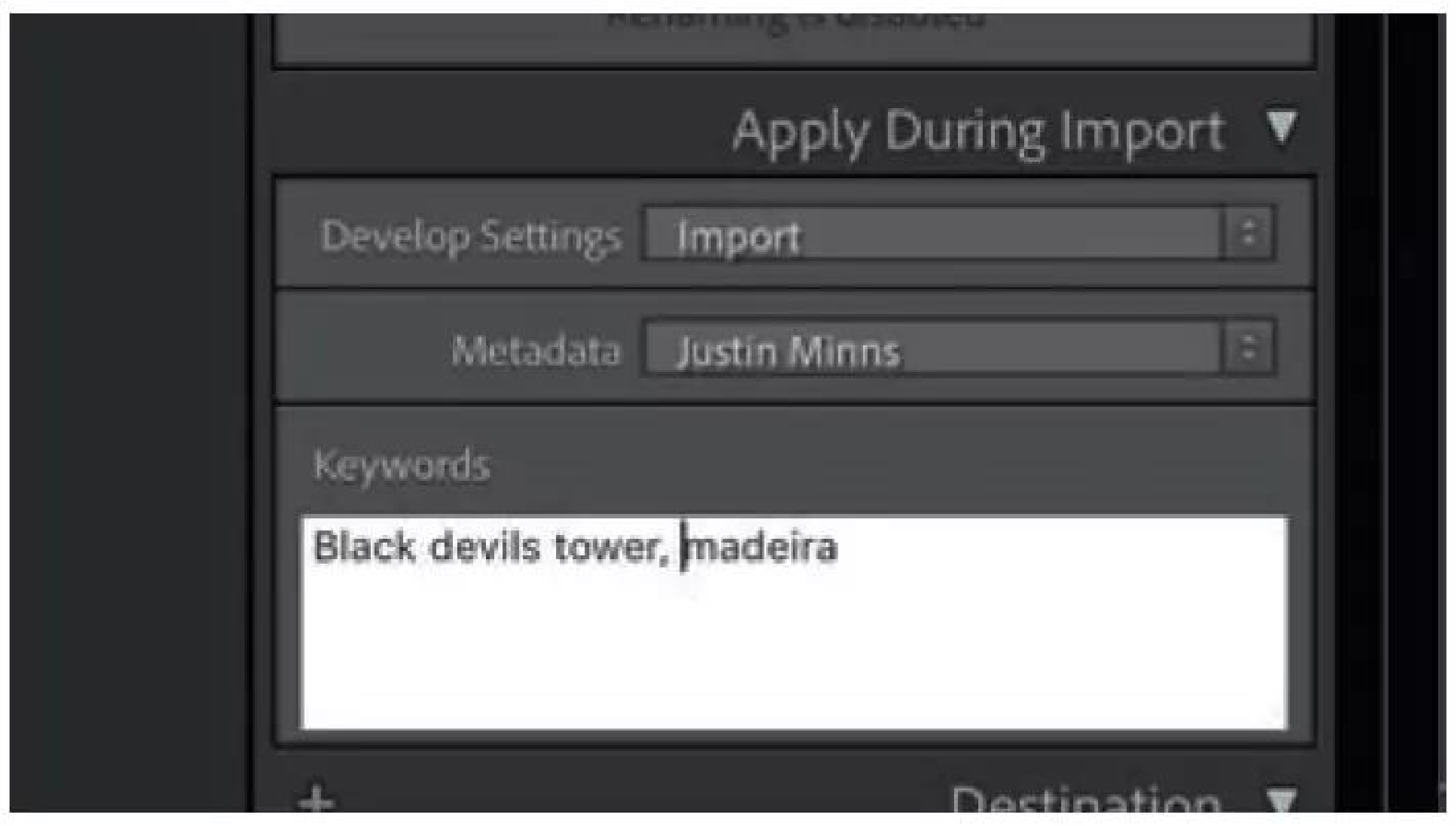
Selecting the best shots to process can be the toughest part of the workflow but there are tools to make it easier. Use the filter bar to show images by keyword, attribute (flags, ratings etc.) and metadata or Survey mode to bring together and compare similar images.



3. Develop

The beauty of processing with Lightroom is that all adjustments are non-destructive so you can always go back and make further adjustments. You can even re-visit some of your old images and re-process them using newly learnt skills or new features that have been added to Lightroom.

each location I have visited that looks for the place name in the keywords plus a 5-star rating so I can quickly find my best images.



Apply During Import

Develop Settings: Import

Metadata: Justin Minns

Keywords: Black devils tower, madeira

Destination

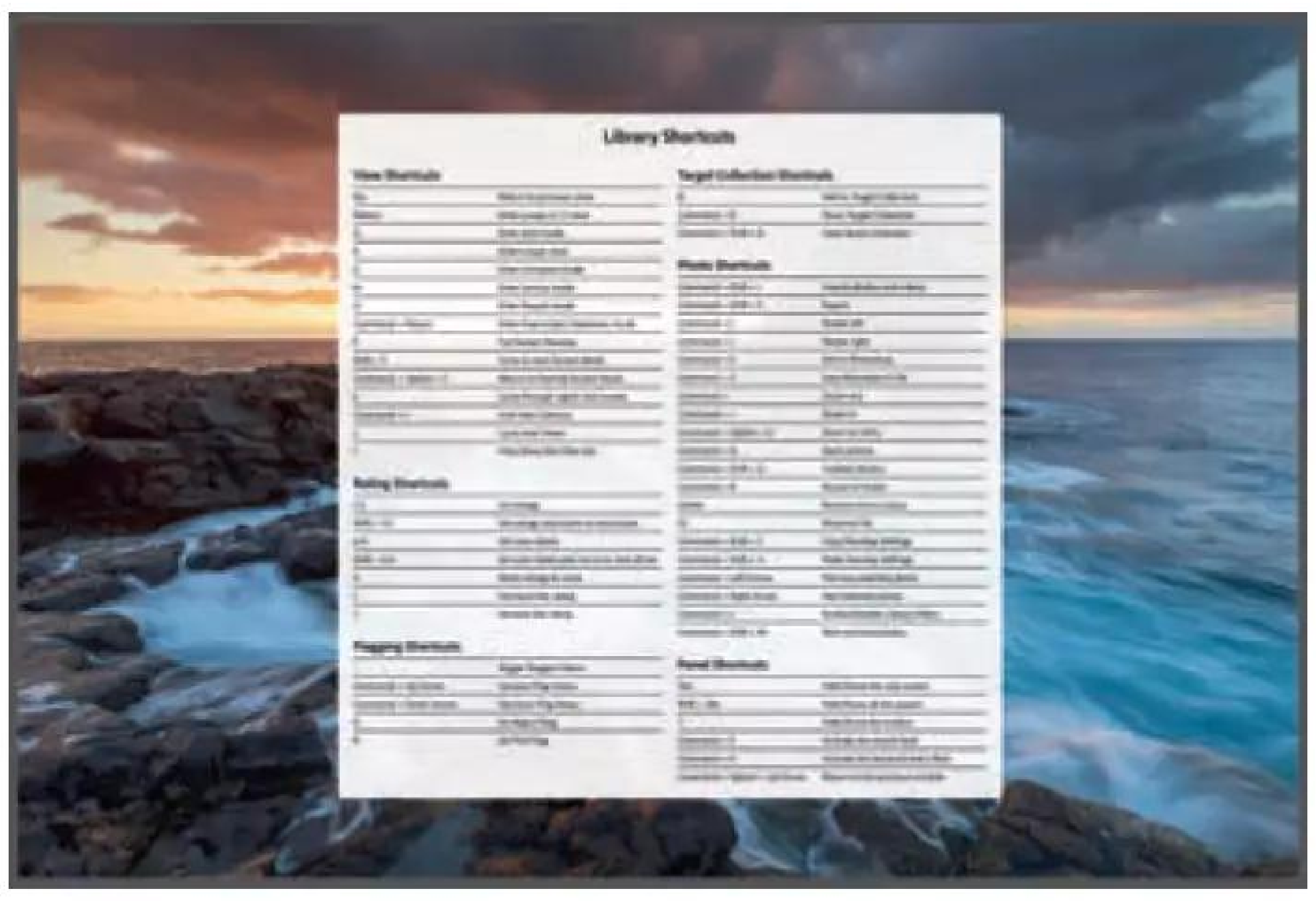
Apply During Import will save you time

Keyboard shortcuts

Using Lightroom's keyboard shortcuts will speed up your workflow no end. There is even a shortcut for showing the shortcuts! Hit Command + / (or Ctrl + / for Windows) to bring up the list for the module that you are currently in and click on it to hide it again.

It's okay to be negative

The presence sliders, Texture, Clarity and Dehaze, are great for adding punch to an image but they work just as well using a negative value. Slid to the left, Dehaze will enhance the ethereal qualities of mist or clarity the softness of a woodland scene.



Lightroom has some handy keyboard shortcuts

Presets

Anything you do repeatedly is worth saving as a preset. For example, create Mask presets for regularly used effects which can then be applied to any mask. Simply create a mask, set the sliders for the effect you want and then at the top, click on the word custom, go to the bottom of the drop-down list, and select save current settings as new preset.

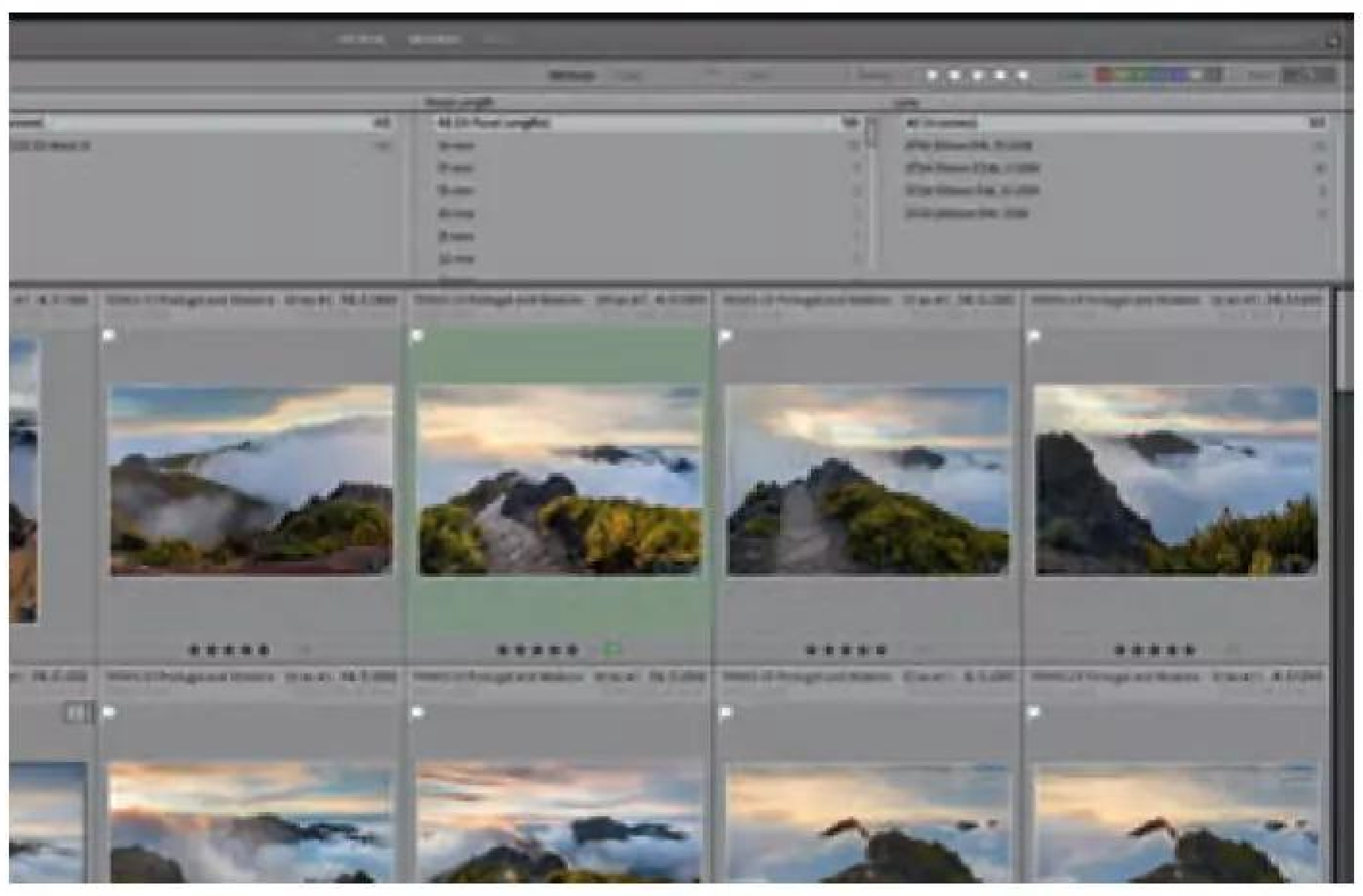
Batch edit

Having processed one image from a shoot you can sync the settings across the whole shoot. With landscape photography the edits will rarely be totally identical from one image to another, but I frequently sync the basic settings to save time before making more individual adjustments.

Create presets of regularly used settings

4. External software

Other software like Photoshop or specialised plug-ins like Topaz or Nik can easily be incorporated into your Lightroom workflow. Just right-click on the image in Lightroom, choose edit in from the drop-down menu, and select the software you want. The image will open in that app and when you're done it will be saved alongside the original in Lightroom.



5. Organise

The Library has some powerful features such as the filter bar and smart collections. It pays to organise your images using keywords, ratings, colour labels or flags. It can be time-consuming but adopting a system will be worth it as your catalogue of images grows.

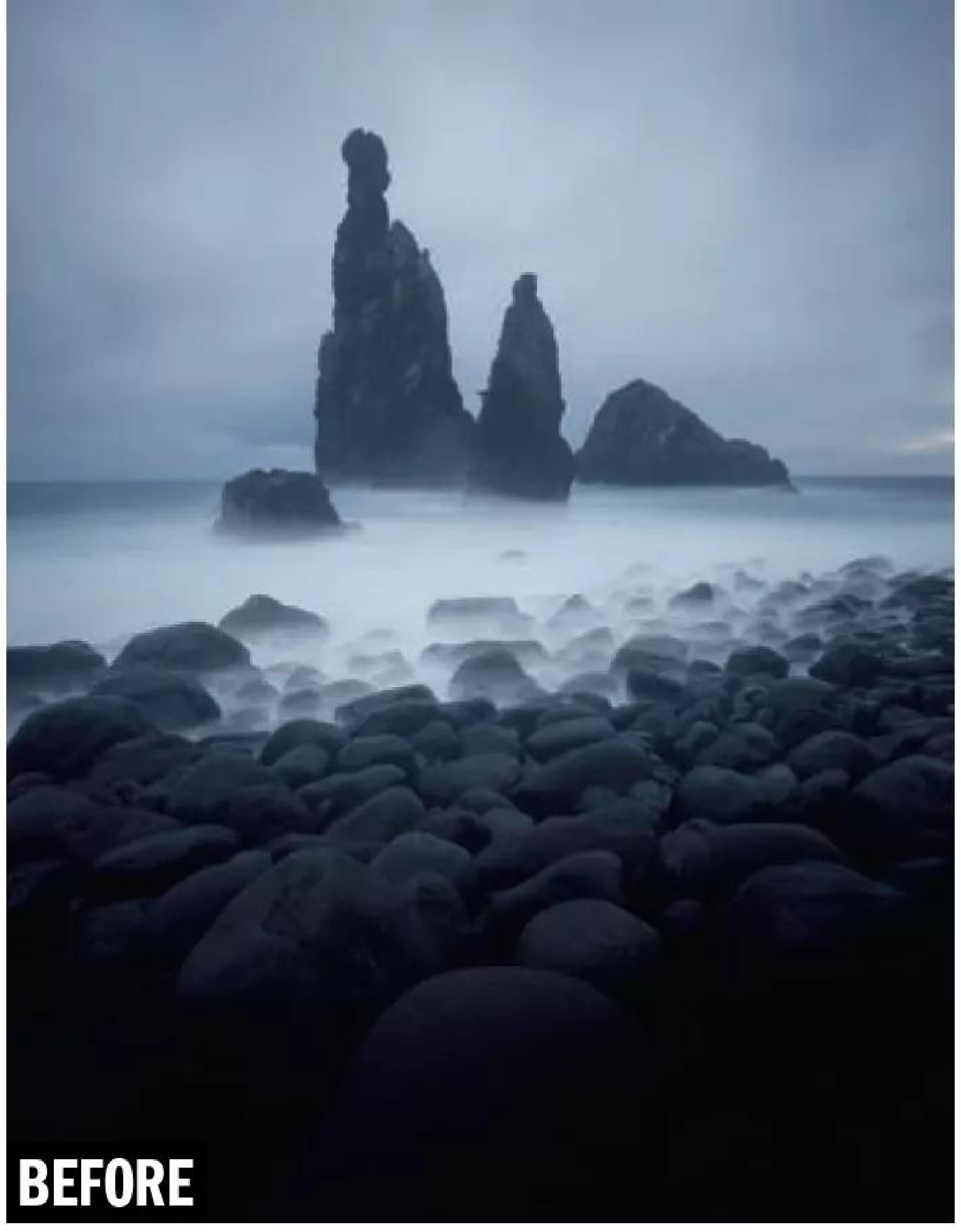
6. Export/Print

Unless your images are going to loiter on your hard drive doing nothing, the final stage is to output them. There are a number of options in Lightroom – either exporting them as digital files, customising the settings to suit the usage, or you can also print, create books, slideshows or upload directly to a website.

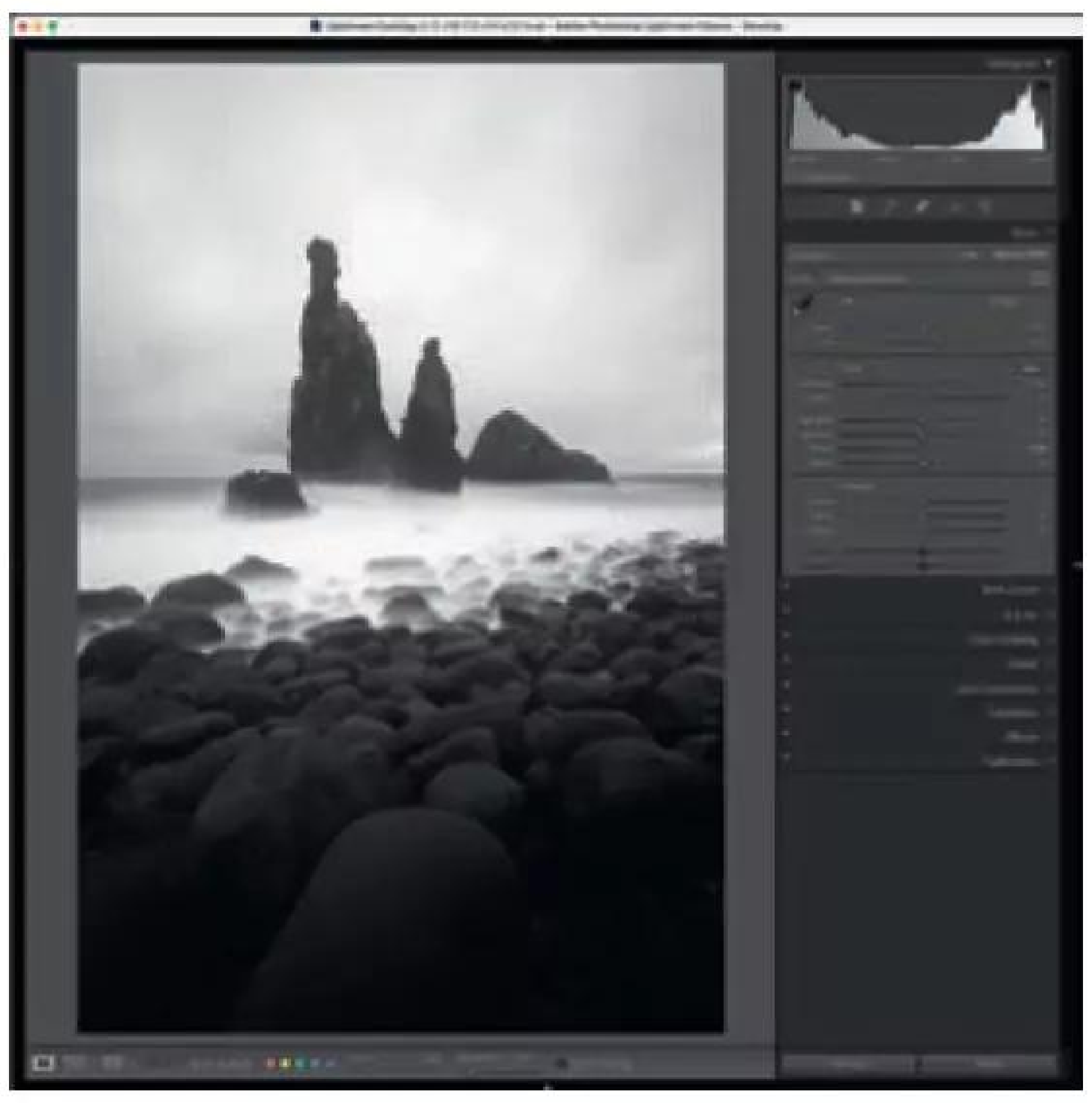
The power of masks

Lightroom masks are a powerful tool enabling us to select and apply edits to individual areas of an image, giving us the ultimate control over our processing. Masks have long been a feature in Lightroom but improvements in recent versions such as the addition of automatic AI selections, luminance and colour selections or the ability to combine multiple masks by adding, subtracting or intersecting them, has made it very quick and easy to make accurate selections.

When taking this photo, the combination of rough seas and strong winds on the coast of Madeira made it impossible to keep my filters clean of spray. My editing usually involves a combination of several minor tweaks; however, this photo needed some fairly robust edits to bring back the contrast. Being clearly divided into areas that each needed different adjustments, it was an obvious choice to use masks to transform it into a dramatic black & white.

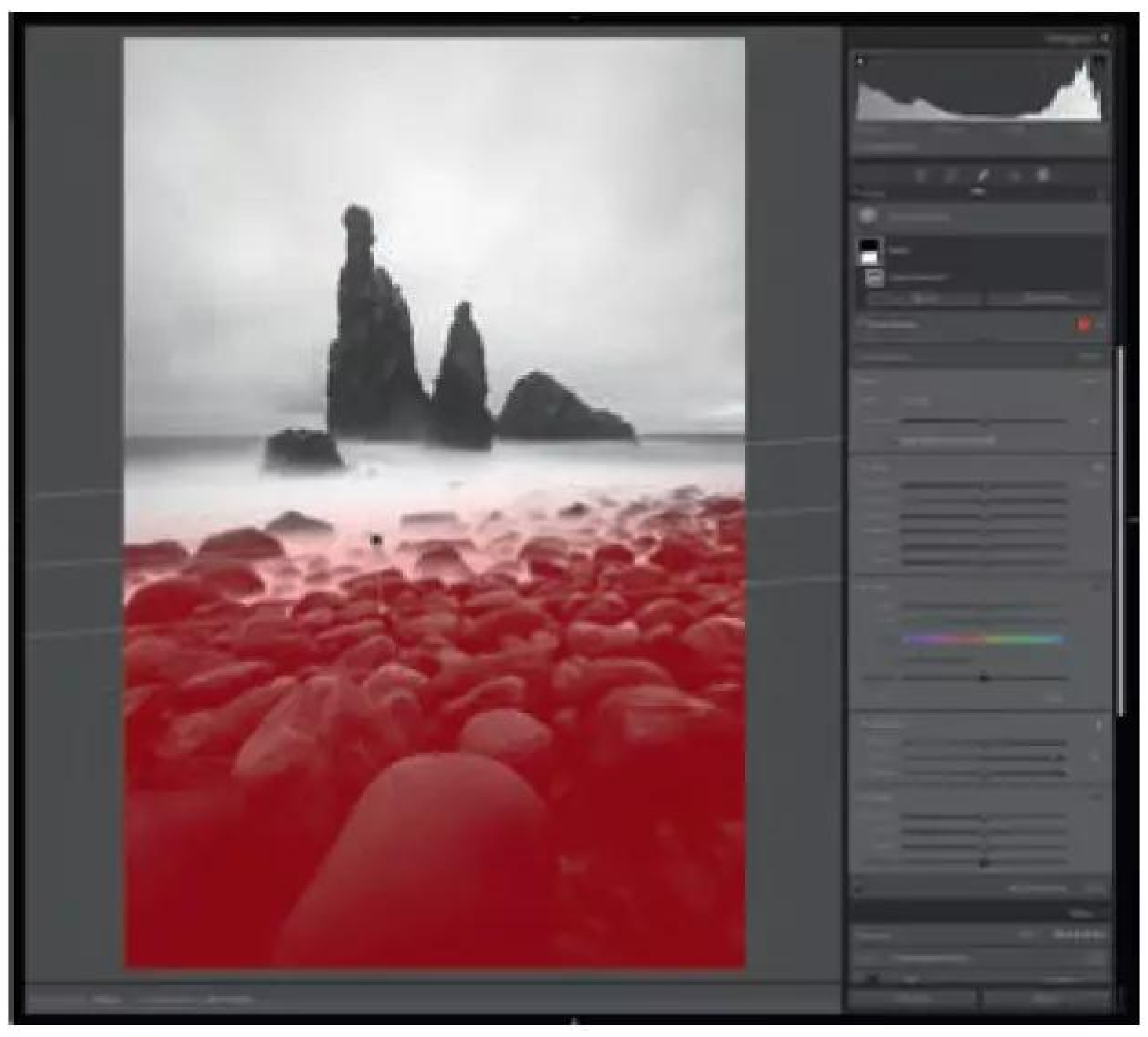


JUSTIN'S STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH ON CONVERTING TO MONO



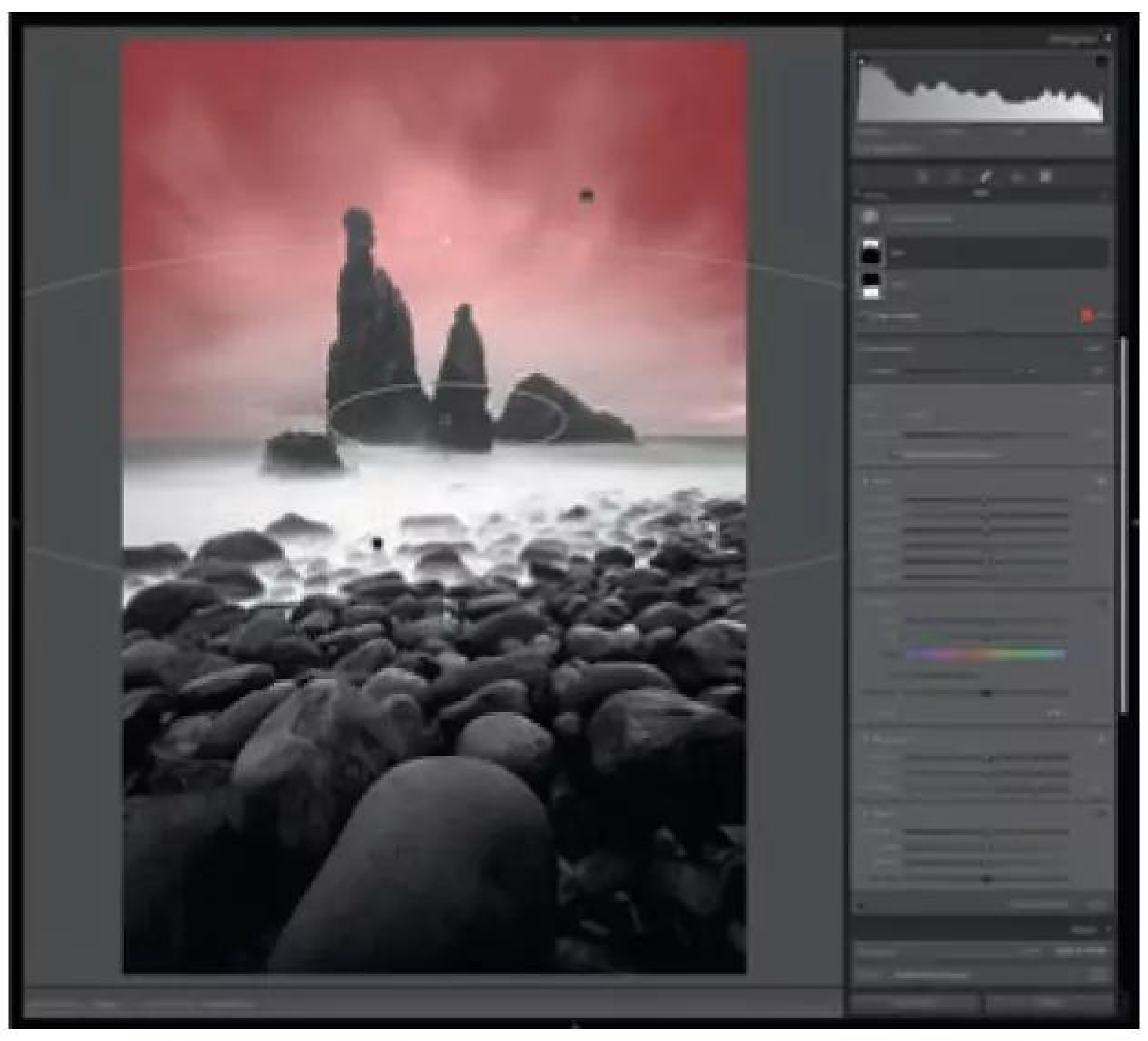
1. Global adjustments

The first step is to make any adjustments to the whole image. In this case, as most of the work will be done using masks, it was just a matter of increasing the whites until the histogram spread to the right – increasing the range of tones. With so little colour and so many textures in the image, I opted to convert it to black & white by selecting the Adobe Monochrome profile.



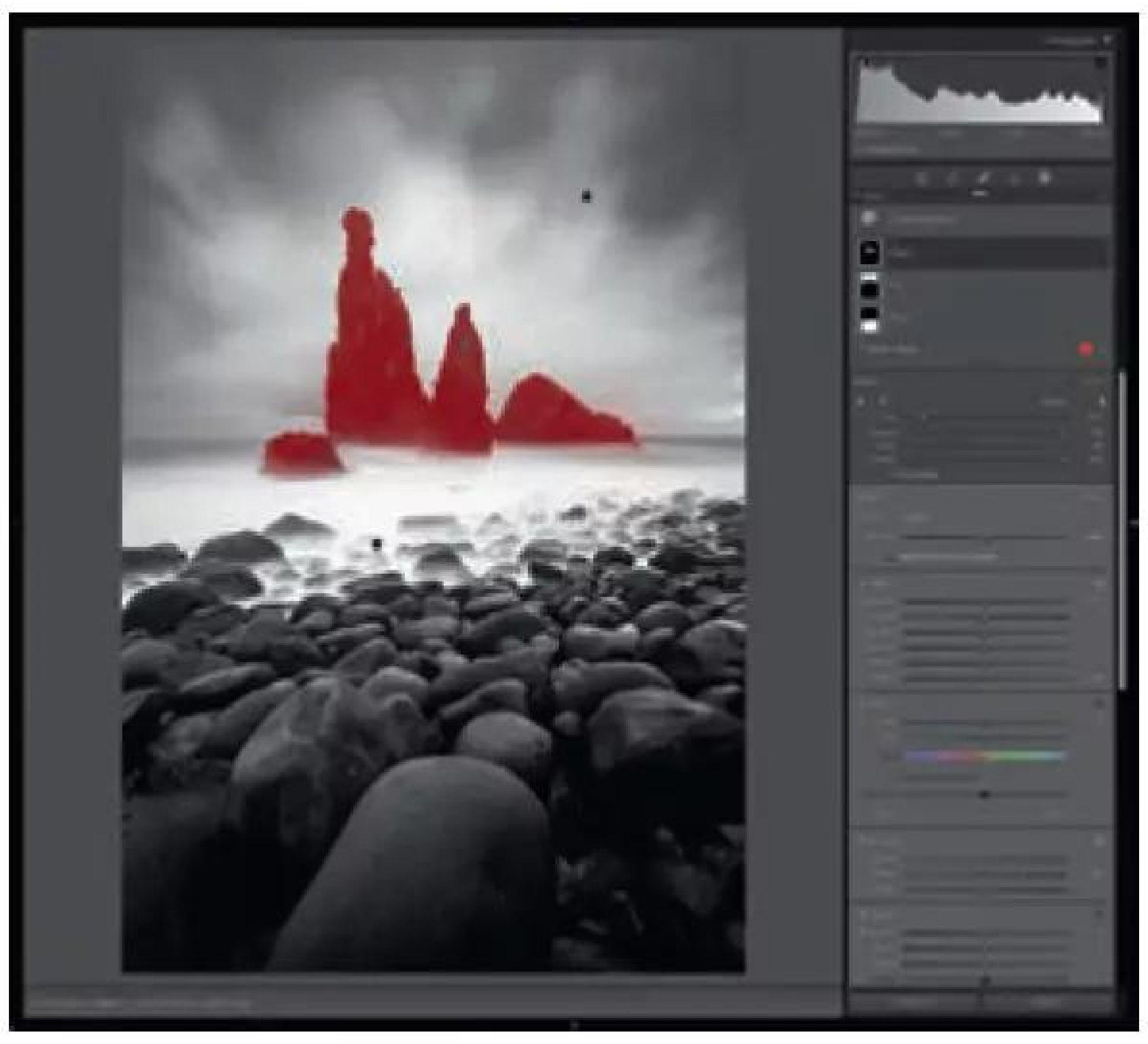
2. Add punch to the rocks

The rocks were looking flat, so I selected them by clicking Create new Mask, choosing Linear gradient and dragging up from the water's edge until the mask was soft enough to blend smoothly with the water. I then brightened the exposure and drastically increased the clarity to +90. When using several masks, it's worth re-naming them. Simply double-click on the name to change it.



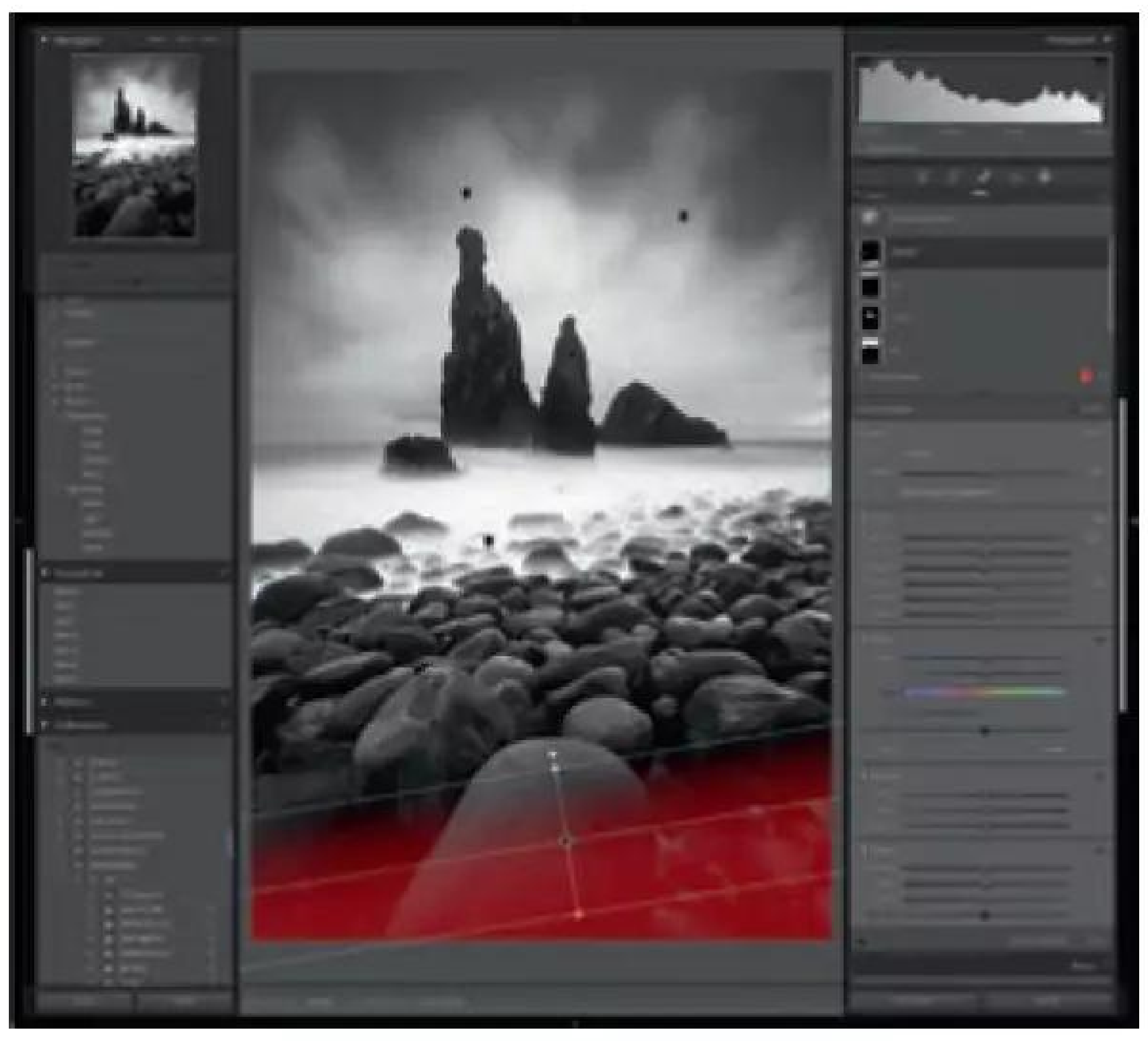
3. Add drama to the sky

To add drama to the sky, I created a new mask and chose Select Sky, which rather cleverly and accurately does just that. The Dehaze slider is brilliant for revealing texture and adding contrast to skies, so I slid it to +65. The horizon was looking dark now so I clicked on subtract and drew a soft radial gradient around the rock stacks and horizon to remove that area from the mask.



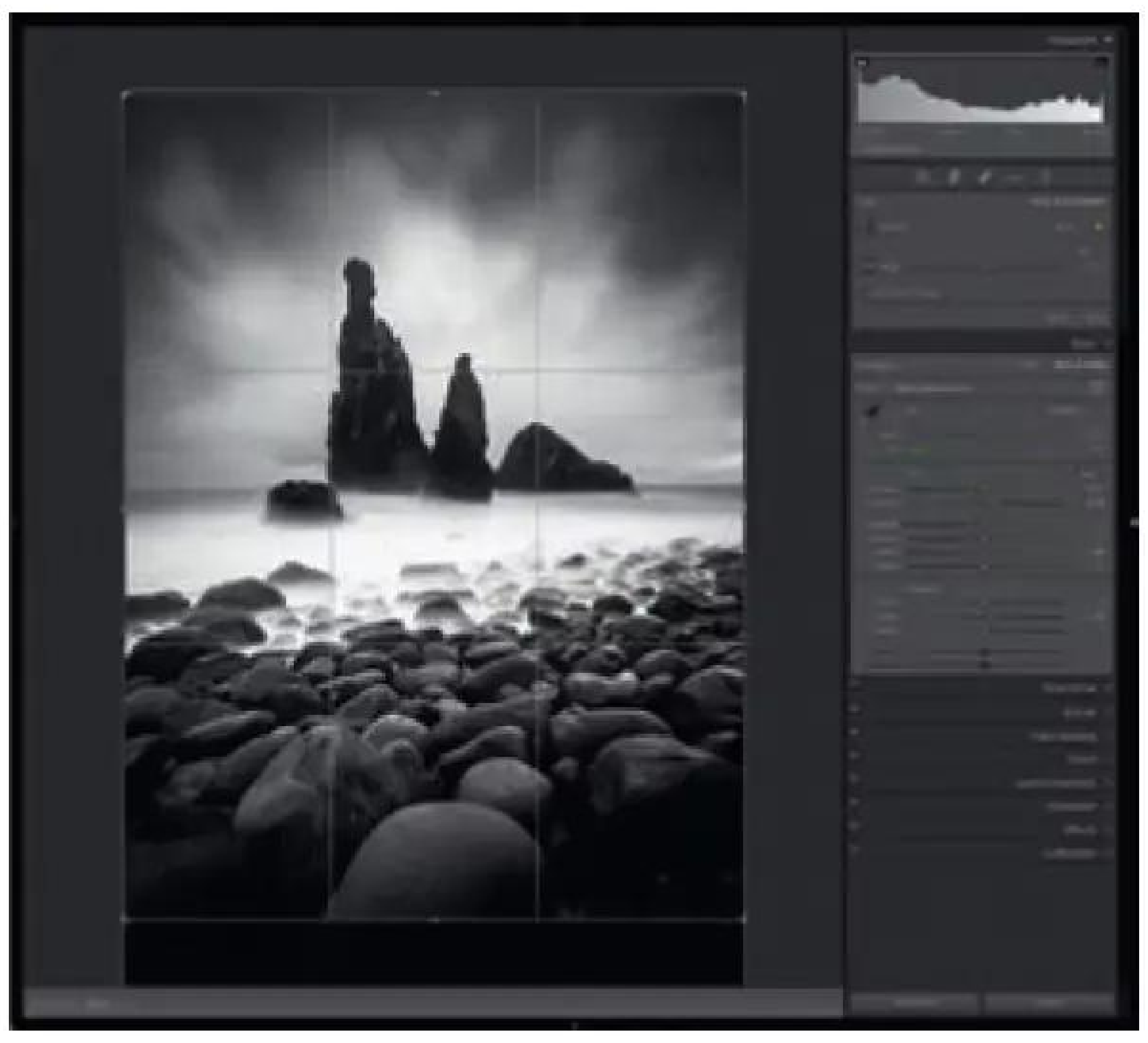
4. Select the rock stacks

To select the rock stacks I use Brush mask and Auto Mask. With a large brush you can paint over the rocks, and provided that the cross in the brush centre stays over the rocks then Auto Mask will ensure that the brush only paints up to the edge of those rocks. Once selected we can darken them by setting the blacks to -15 and clarity to +50.



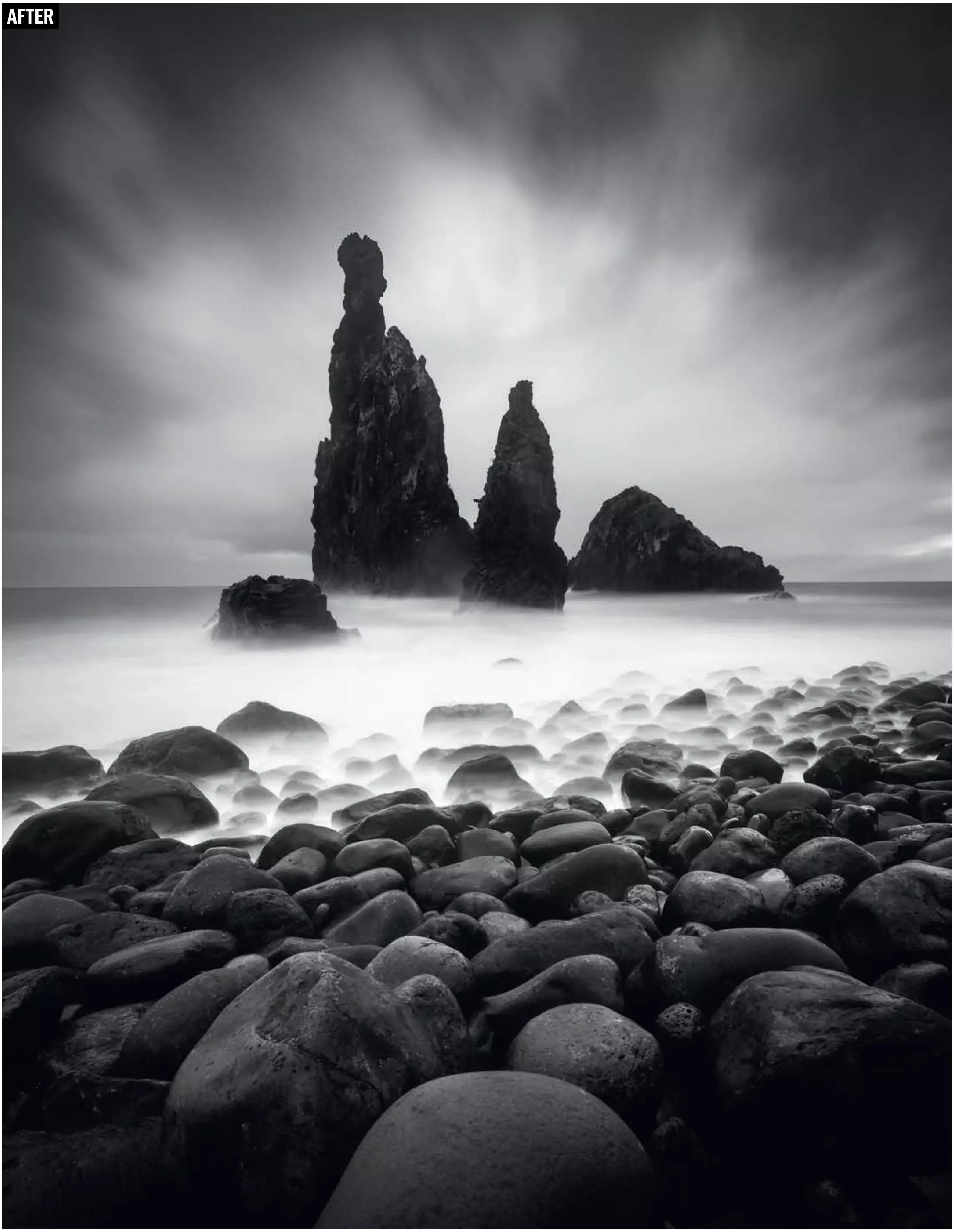
5. Darken the top and bottom

The foreground rocks are a little bright in the bottom corners and I don't want them to distract from the main action in the centre of the image, so I use a linear gradient with the exposure slider set to -0.35 to darken the bottom of the image. Similarly, I fine-tuned the look of the sky with a linear gradient to slightly darken the very top of the image.



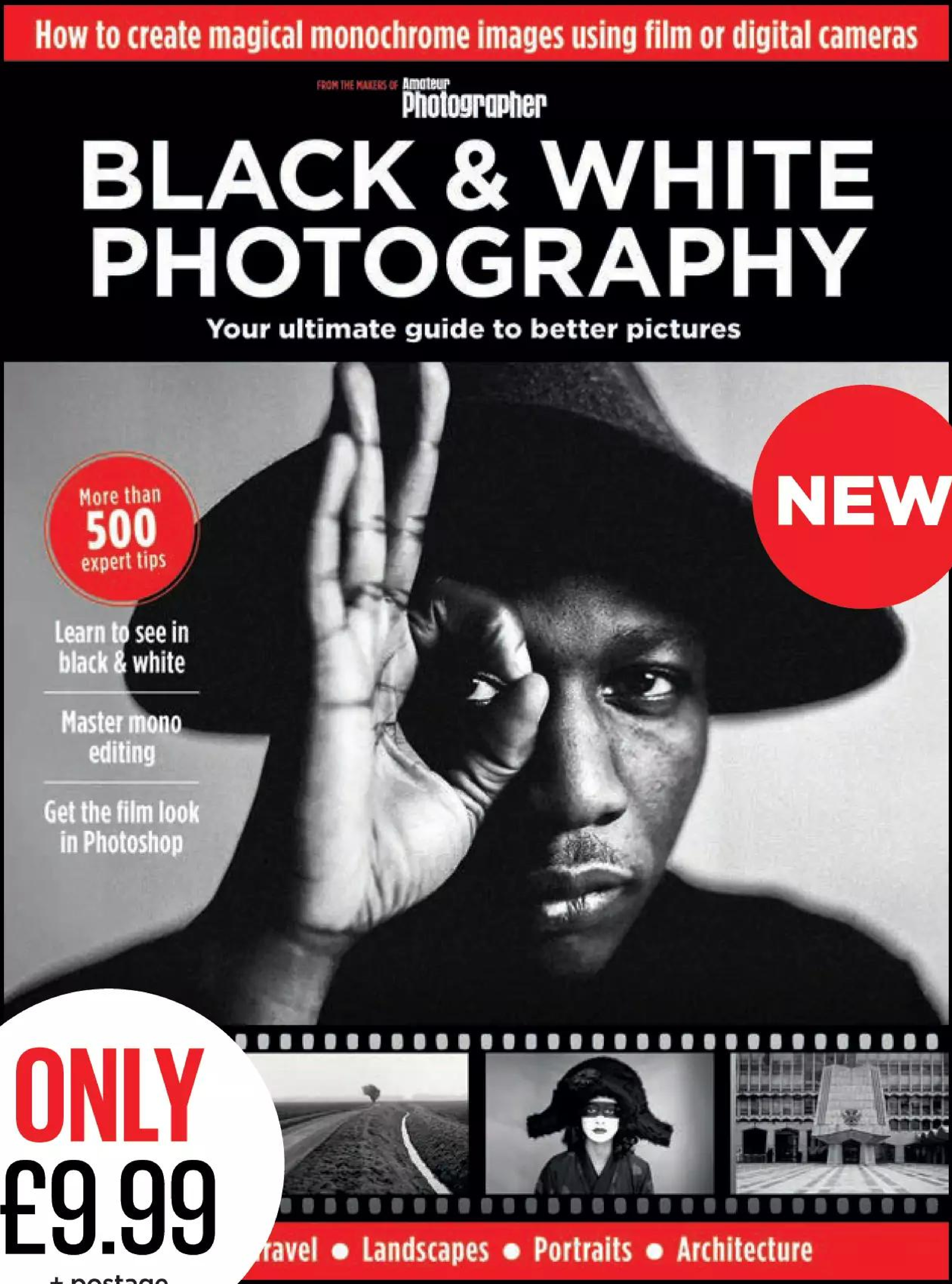
6. Finishing touches

Masks are non-destructive so at this stage if any areas look too light or dark for example, you can still return to make any final tweaks. All that remains is to sharpen, remove dust spots and then crop. In this case I chose to change the ratio from the camera's standard 3:2 to 4:3 which often has a nicer look for portrait images.


AFTER

From the makers of Amateur Photographer magazine

THE NEW MUST-BUY FOR ANY PHOTOGRAPHER


How to create magical monochrome images using film or digital cameras
FROM THE MAKERS OF Amateur Photographer
BLACK & WHITE PHOTOGRAPHY
Your ultimate guide to better pictures
More than 500 expert tips
Learn to see in black & white
Master mono editing
Get the film look in Photoshop
NEW
ravel • Landscapes • Portraits • Architecture

ONLY £9.99
+ postage

Black & white photography is as popular as ever, because it adds mood, drama and atmosphere, as well as making your pictures look 'classic'. In this packed 132 page guide, you'll learn all the essential skills, such as choosing your subject, boosting texture, tone and contrast with editing software, and making monochrome work for landscapes, portrait, street shots and more. There's plenty of inspiration from world-famous masters like Michael Kenna, and we also help you get started with black & white film developing and scanning – there's now a wide choice of superb yet affordable black & white film. Find out how to lose the colour and win!

- **More than 500 expert tips over 132 pages**
- **Pick the best subjects and 'see' in black & white**
- **The art and craft of amazing mono landscapes**
- **Take striking, beautifully toned portraits**
- **Edit your shots for maximum impact**
- **Go minimal: Michael Kenna interview**
- **Black & white film starter guide**

ORDER YOUR COPY TODAY

Visit **shop.kelsey.co.uk/BWPhoto**
Call on **01959 543 747** and quote **BKZAMPBWP**

Lines are open Mon-Fri 8.30am to 5.30pm. Calls are charged at your standard network rate.

SCAN ME

From the makers of Amateur Photographer magazine

THE NEW MUST-BUY FOR ANY PHOTOGRAPHER

How to master the art of perfect people shots
THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO
PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHY
NEW
Tips for every
Lighting masterclass
Secrets of portrait editing
Shooting weddings, maternity and more!
g their best • More creative effects • Best portrait lenses & more

ONLY
£9.99
+ postage

Everyone is a portrait photographer these days, thanks to selfies and smartphones, but to do it properly is an entirely different matter. In this packed, 132-page guide, we cover all the essential skills involved in taking great people shots.

We reveal the best lenses to use, how to get your subject to relax and be themselves, and how to expand your creative repertoire with easy but effective studio lighting. Lots of pro portrait shooters share their tips and insights, and if you are interested in making money from your images, you'll find masterclasses on wedding, maternity and boudoir photography. To ensure your portraits look their best, editing skills are also covered in-depth, along with more creative and experimental approaches.

ORDER YOUR COPY TODAY

Visit **shop.kelsey.co.uk/AMPortrait**
Call on **01959 543 747** and quote **BKZAMPPORTP**

Lines are open Mon-Fri 8.30am to 5.30pm. Calls are charged at your standard network rate.

SCAN ME